

Empowered

Living Beyond Your Limitations

Scott Johnson

The voice of our inner heart still carry within it the old patterns and mindsets of the past. Because of this we still lack the sense of ownership of that which is really ours.

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Acknowledgments

There are always people around us that are used by God to inspire, assist and move us on to greatness. I call each of these people “Life Expansion Experts” because of their influence in my life. Much of what you will read in these pages is the result of years of my own personal experiences, but I have gleaned wisdom also from those who influenced me in one way or another. There have been many good people for whose influence I thank God, but as the first I have to mention Bern Moses, who is no longer with us. He was someone who sought to express love throughout his life and as a result positively impacted many lives including mine.

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Introduction

Empowered for life is a life expansion program that will radically move you forward toward the fulfillment of your dreams, ambitions and desires in life. But it is so much more than that, it is not just about us but also the world that we get to touch. Getting people “unstuck” is what God does best. This book is not only about YOU living an incredible life but it is also about becoming a “change agent” in the lives of others around you as well.

You are going to discover that truly “life is good”. Your capacity to be loved and give love will expand dramatically. You will breathe easier, experience greater levels of joy and fulfilled hope.

You will walk away with a greater sense of destiny and purpose. You will think more clearly about yourself, your potential and the direction you are going. You will discover that limitless living is truly within your grasp. There is no wall or stone in your pathway. You can experience everything that God has said you can be. You can do everything God says you can do.

Your heart will be exposed to a new awareness of the reality of God’s purpose in your life. You are going to discover that God’s intention for your life impacts every area of your life and world. You

will understand in a greater measure that God's intention toward you is only good. What God has for you is not just the forgiveness of sin or the promise of a heavenly home but it is what Jesus describes as living "life in abundance".

Life Expansion

The word 'salvation' in the New Testament (Sozo) means, saved, healed, delivered, blessed, prosperous, protected, made whole, or set apart. The word 'saved' speaks of all of the promises of God as we follow Jesus and experience this incredible life.

Sozo life is something that reaches and has influence in all aspects of your life and as a consequence your world.

*"Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; **lengthen your cords** and strengthen your stakes ..."* Isaiah 54:2

Each of us was born with an innate desire for growth, achievement and expansion. It is part of who we are and what we were designed to be. Bob Dylan said it well when he wrote the lyrics ... "he who isn't busy being born is being busy dying". It is easy to become stagnant in our lives, especially if we are defining ourselves by our environment and our current experiences.

Most people have been sold the idea that they are the sum total of their life experience. 99% of people associate themselves with and live their lives from this standpoint.

What this tells us is that most of the way we have lived our lives has been based upon past memories or current situations. People dwell in

the past because of the things that have happened to them, including both positive and negative experiences. As long as a person focuses on and lives from their past, the results of the past are all they are going to reproduce. Life is not in the past; life is in the now and in the future! Yes, there are those positive things in our pasts that can help inspire us to press on, but they should never be reason to keep us from defining where we are headed in our future.

God is all about expansion! Think about it, He created a universe that is right now, moment by moment, expanding on an ongoing basis.

My greatest joy as a father is to watch my children grow and become incredible gifts to the world. It's the same way with God, He loves it when you are inventing, creating and expressing your uniqueness in extraordinary ways.

Life Wasn't Meant to Just Be Lived; It Was Meant To Be Sung

God has created you to live out a life of total and complete fulfillment, in other words, to sing the song you were meant to sing. Possibly, just possibly, your song is a song of mercy and grace that flows into every crack and crevice of our world. Possibly your personal composition is to be a joy maker in the lives of people everywhere. Maybe your song is to be an encourager to broken lives in which you are a restorer of hope to the hopeless.

Sadly, most people don't get to live out their personal song during their lifetimes. In many cases they have totally given up on any possibility or chance of it's ever becoming a reality. You know how it

is; we all start out in life with a pencil in our hands, writing out our personal ambitions and dreams. As we grow older we eventually turn our pencils around to the other side and instead of writing down our dreams we begin to erase those same dreams that we started out with.

Now, there are those times and seasons in all of our lives where we have experienced the sound of harmonious music flowing out and through our lives. There is nothing more thrilling then to know and feel the progression of our own contribution to the world around us. But sadly it seems that life has a way of knocking the wind out of our sails and causing us to eventually forget the joys of singing our own personal songs. As a result we become complacent and accustomed to the current surroundings and eventually convince ourselves that this is all there is to life.

At that point, Life has, in our minds, gotten in the way, like a garage that is so full of stuff that we are now forced to park our car in the driveway. We feel like life is unfair because our choices have been stripped from us. We are no longer enjoying life; instead we are just passing time and going through the motions.

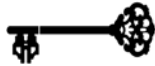
Maybe you have become complacent and accustomed to your current surroundings and have convinced yourself that this is all there is to life. Or possibly you are a person who is motivated but for one reason or another you are frustrated with the progress you are making.

The good news is that no matter what you are currently experiencing, God's intention for your life is ONLY good! His desire for you is that

you live out your life with a heart filled with a belief that says, "All things are possible!"

The purpose of this book is to remind you just how incredible you really are and what type of life God means for you. We will examine what might be getting in the way and stopping you, and God's answer to removing every obstacle. Close your eyes for a moment and imagine what your life would be like if you had absolutely no roadblocks of any kind in your life. Whatever you feel has been stopping you from moving forward, see it gone.

My desire for you is that you rediscover that truth - the truth that God has placed genius on the inside of you! As a result you will discover what it means to live a life of limitless potential. Jesus said it best when He stated, "*Get away with me and you will recover your life...*" – I like that! He goes on to say, "*I will show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me, work with me, watch how I do it, and learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.*" That's it! Take Jesus up on this wonderful personal invitation to experience true fulfillment and freedom and join the symphony music for which you were designed for. The universe around you is continually expanding. Are you?



Chapter 1

What Does It Mean To Be Empowered?

The word empowerment is typically used when describing a management style. The word is spoken with anxiety by some leaders because of the negative repercussions that can result. Frightening images of employees giving away the store and bosses giving up control can be real concerns. It's interesting to note that some employees want more oversight and some want to be told what to do.

When people are empowered they don't always look up to the hierarchy for answers, they take responsibility to solve problems where they occur. They have the freedom to act and are also accountable for the results. Empowerment does not mean unlimited license... "just do whatever you want to do..." It means responsible freedom.

My wife Debra worked at one time for a hotel in Sacramento. One hot 100 degree day the ice machine broke. There was a full house that night, and the guests were complaining because there was no ice. Debra was the only one working there, the manager and owner was gone. So, Debra locked up the office and went across the street to the Chinese restaurant and asked (Matthew 7:7) if she could have some ice

for her guests due to the broken ice machine. They gladly filled up a bucket of ice and had one of their employees carry it over to the hotel for her at no cost. She went door to door in the hotel and gave everyone ice.

As a result, she received many wonderful customer reviews about the great customer service they had received at this hotel. Many of these guests were lawyers and politicians who normally stayed at the Hyatt, but because the Hyatt had been filled to capacity that night, many of these people were first time customers of this hotel. Because of great customer service, the hotel that night received new loyal repeat customers.

What aggravates customers? One big irritation occurs when they are standing in front of an employee who is telling them that they will need to “check with the supervisor” to solve their problem. The employee answers this way because they don’t have the authority to make the decision. This happens a lot in the hospitality industry, employees who could easily solve certain problems and issues on their own don’t feel empowered to give immediate answers. The end result for the employees is that employees feel a lack of ownership and hidden resentment, and therefore no loyalty to the company.

Obviously empowerment must go beyond a particular management style at work. It really has to with every area of our lives. Unfortunately people give away their personal authority all the time, either by direct choice or by abdicating their choices by making no decision at all. We grow up in a world that seeks to disempower us in many ways without

ever realizing it. Our authority has been diminished by well meaning parents, teachers, coaches and leaders without our awareness.

If we look over the last six thousand years of human history as a cognitive community we can see that we are still not getting the results that we know that we are capable of as a society. In the last century there have been untold numbers of people who have dedicated themselves to the study and improvement of the human condition and as a result have acknowledged that, in spite of all of the effort that has been expended, we are still only getting eighty percent of the results from twenty percent of the people. In the more volatile business environments where direct selling takes place we see the even lower result of ninety percent of the efforts coming from ten percent of the people.

It is amazing to think about the multitude of people who have entered into the personal development industry over the last century. Most likely you could easily name a few of them right off the top of your memory: people like Napoleon Hill, Norman Vincent Peale, Clement Stone, Dale Carnegie, Og Mandino, Zig Ziglar, Dennis Waitley, Robert Schuller, and Tony Robbins, just to name a few. Each of these has made significant contributions to our society in their own way, through books, seminars, CD's, and manuals as well as every other possible medium. I suppose if you stacked the total works of all of these individuals into a pile you would have created not just a mountain but possibly a mountain range of material, all dedicated to the enhancement of humanity. But, even in the midst of this we are still only getting marginal results.

We may be inclined to tell ourselves that this is just the way things are. It was Pareto who came up with this idea that eighty percent of all results come from twenty percent of the effort, but this is only a rule of thumb formula, it's not chiseled in granite. Yet we somehow satisfy ourselves and say that "this is just the way it is". People might say, "Well, things aren't really that bad." but when you crack through the socio-economic veneer that people present to us, you will find lives full of hurt, pain and dismay. There are people around us every day that are living out lives of quiet desperation without our ever realizing it.

Personal empowerment has been God's intention from the very beginning. The Bible tells us that He placed the first man and the first woman in the Garden and empowered them to "subdue and have dominion". He gave them not just the direction for their lives but also gave them the power and authority to live it out on a grand scale. They were given the freedom to act and are also accountable for the results which have brought us to where we are at today. The good news is that even though man dropped the ball in the beginning, God has not given up on him.

The question of God's ultimate sovereignty arises here. If man screwed everything up, then why didn't God simply snap His fingers and fix everything? This is because the ultimate power that was given to man was the power of choice. This means that God has chosen to work through His creation, man, to redeem, restore and empower humanity back to His first intention. For God to somehow step into human history outside of this would mean that the authority God gave Adam and Eve was a sham. God's sovereignty in His dealings with man is fully dependent upon working through man, not by subverting

him. Throughout scripture you will find that each time God stepped into history, He always worked through the will of a person. Whether it was Abraham, Moses, Elijah or Esther, He always worked in concert with a person's will.

Restored and Empowered

This is the whole point of why God became a citizen of Earth in the person of Jesus. He became a man and as such legally was able to take back the authority that mankind had lost. God could not undermine man's will outside of the will of man; He became a man and did what no other man could do by giving of Himself as a sacrifice.

“For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:17

It was God's ultimate plan to get that authority back for man through, as the Bible calls Jesus, “The Son of Man”. Jesus has stripped all authority from Satan and has now given it to us.

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” (Matthew 28:18)

"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10:19)

We must see that we have been empowered to manage every area of our lives. In the New Testament we can read scripture after scripture

about how God worked through Jesus to restore and empower mankind back to His first intention.

Above Average

A prominent businessman stood before his audience at a conference. The strength and determination of character showed on his face, but a moment of hesitation revealed a deeper emotion hidden behind his outward strength. As he spoke a single tear rolled down his cheek, and he told them honestly, “One of my motives for making so much money was so that I would have the money to hire others to do what I don’t like doing. But there is one thing, that I have never been able to hire anyone to do for me, that is, to find my own sense of purpose and fulfillment.” He said, “I would do anything to discover that”. You see, we live in a world full of lives that are not in sync with their true selves. The results are both evident and in many cases devastating.

Being in sync could really be described as being someone who is living authentically to their own true self. Living an authentic life means that a person is living true to their identity, living true to their purpose and living true to their passions and core desires.

Living in sync with our purpose and passions results in a more fruitful and productive life. We enjoy a greater sense of satisfaction, pleasure and fulfillment, as opposed to living a mundane unfulfilled life, the kind of life that leads to many of the social ills and difficulties that people are facing today. My hope and desire for your life is that you will discover, embrace and move past all of the handicaps, difficulties and issues that have held you back in the past. Instead, I

want you to discover, embrace and reaffirm God's first intention for your life. I believe that God has given us all things that pertain to living a fulfilled and complete life.

We may not have been able to choose the circumstances we were born into, but you can discover God's master plan for life. As a result you can start experiencing a more authentic life that is both rewarding and fulfilling. God never intended you to be just average, that's not His plan for anyone. In the book of Genesis account of when God created man He gave us a hint concerning His intention for humanity. Genesis 1:26 says, "*And God said, let us make man in our image according to our likeness and let him have dominion.*" Right here at the beginning of our existence we are allowed to see the full picture of man's potential. Notice here in Genesis that God's image is in the same context as our position and our capacity. God's image and likeness in you and the dominion, which means capacity to live out God's image on the Earth, go hand in hand.

You see, God is not going to place His image in you and then turn around and frustrate you by not giving you the ability to bring it forth and manifest it within your world. It was God's first intention for man on our planet that humanity would and could live out their potential in every possible way. Some might say that this was something that was only met before the fall and we shouldn't expect this in today's world. Romans 5:17 says something different/ It tells us "*For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.*"

This refers to Adam's choice to become self-sufficient and not find fulfillment in God. As a result of this choice, the desire to live self-sufficient spread to all humanity for generations to come. But when Jesus came He gave us the gift of life, or the gift of righteousness, and that is what it is saying here in this passage when it says, "much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness". And the results will be that we "will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."

I don't believe that God created you or anyone else to simply be average. God created you to be above average! His desire for you is that you would manifest His presence, His image, in a very unique way on the Earth.

It did take a dream to get you where you are today – earning a college degree, getting married, having a family, but let me encourage you to not slip into living a mundane life of mediocrity.

You see, the purpose of this book is to assist you in expanding the borders of your heart to the point that you are living out your God intended purpose and passion in a relevant and authentic way that is both rewarding and fulfilling.



Chapter 2

Choosing Life Instead of Life Choosing You

You may not be aware of it but in the last few years we have been witnessing a shift in the arena of how ministry takes place. On one end of the spectrum you have a growing group of individuals that are becoming dissatisfied with how church is done. Typically, we have looked to Pastors and others who are involved in some type of direct ministry to be those leading the cause.

Do you realize that every great accomplishment, every invention, every discovery and advance of mankind was created to solve a problem? Think about it. You can't build a house unless you know what it is for. You can't build anything unless you know what you want it to be, where you want it to go. Our world is full of millions of people who are seemingly walking blindfolded through life, groping in the dark, moving this way and that, never more than a few feet from where they started because they don't know the problem they were born to solve. Living a life of purpose that is on purpose is the way our creator created us to be.

But remember that we don't need to live a life of purposeful living in order to have significance, because our significance comes from God. We live a life of purpose because that is just who we are. It is simply a part of the DNA that has been passed to us from our designer.

Have you ever stopped to consider just how much we are controlled by outside influences? Too many people become products of their environment, victimized by the opinions and assessments of others around them. They lack the will to change, challenge themselves, others, or their environment. People in our world for the most part are living lives by default. In other words they spend their entire lives reacting to circumstances, accommodating people and conditions.

Believe me, this is not God's plan for you. Let me say that again. It's important that you get this. Most people spend their entire lives reacting to circumstances; in other words, they're living by the dictates of their environment. If the sun is shining, somebody smiles at you, your car starts in the morning, or your boss is friendly that day then everything is all right. But heaven forbid, if the opposite is true, you end up reacting to those people and circumstances around us, and pretty soon you're not even living your own life. You're being pushed and shoved on a daily basis, no wonder there is so much stress.

Accommodating people and circumstances is something most people do naturally. There is nothing wrong with this in and of itself, but if it keeps you from living authentically where it concerns your purpose, then you might as well find a dark closet, shut the door behind you and live the rest of your life there.

We accommodate people and conditions in our lives because we let go of our authority starting at a very young age. Not only does our culture seek to undermine our authority on a continual basis but it is also nullified and confiscated by well-meaning parents, peers and teachers throughout our young lives.

Can you imagine a creator desiring anything but the best for His creation? Take a moment and consider the intention of the creator at the time of conception. At that instant, as if it were a flashing light, excellence occurs. In the womb the packaging of God's design and intention is at work creating unlimited capacities to live life without restraint. It is also in this place that outside influences begin to have an influence too. For instance, the mind begins its process of development based on poor nutrition or good nutrition. Other things come into play as well, attitudes, the environment and stresses from the mother begin to package the unborn child's mind in such a way that it tends to become uncertain. Then of course this little baby is born into a world that has lost its way from God's original intention.

Because of the admonition of society that tell us that parents are responsible for their children, parents try to direct and mold their children in such a way to cause them to conform to the parents' perception of the way things should be. This is not to say that this is uniformly wrong, of course, but in many ways as development begins to take place the child's innate authority is diminished by a loving parent in an effort to keep that mind manageable.

This can be a fine line for a parent to walk even in the best of conditions. You can either mold and direct or guide and nurture. In one

case you are preparing that child to be free to grow without stifling the enthusiasm, the excitement, exuberance and curiosity of the child. The other tends to be much more constrained and restrictive.

An example is a set of parents who guided and nurtured rather than molded and directed their six year old girl. This child, while at school, was told by the teacher that she was a bad girl. Her response was to brace herself and tell the teacher, “No I am not, you have no right to call me that,” “I made a mistake but I am not a bad girl. Please do not call me that anymore.” The personal authority that this child displayed does not typically exist in children today. Instead of maintaining their authority they succumb, accommodate and take on being that “bad girl” as part of their persona.

Talk very long to any number of adults about how they grew up and the conditions and influences they have faced and you will discover specific points of hurt, pain and inner struggle that have conditioned them for the mediocrity that they face today.

A man who rarely picks up a book and reads discovers that it is connected to his father, who told him as a young child that he was a poor reader.

A young girl, who became convinced by her teachers that she had a learning disability, lowered her expectations not only throughout her school years but throughout life. As an adult now, she lives in extreme poverty and struggles to raise her baby on limited resources. She has adapted and learned to live in limitation as a way of life.

Another young person whose parents owned their own small business grew up hearing the words “We can’t afford it”, “What do you think, money grows on trees?” Later in life they struggle financially and don’t know the reason why.

It is interesting to take note that most people are living this way and are doing it without any awareness of what is happening. I will talk about this later in more detail, but suffice it to say that it is easy for us to fall into the trap of this kind of living in which our day is filled with a long list of events that we are chasing after and reacting to. It is said that in any given day, from the time we get up to the time we go to bed, there are about 50,000 thoughts that go through our head. The sad truth is that if we are not careful the same 50,000 thoughts that you had yesterday will be the same thoughts you had the day before, a week, month or even a year ago. It’s incredible when you think about how unconscious we really are. How many of those 50,000 thoughts are you consciously aware of? 100? 200? 1,000?

The first thing you do in the morning when you awake is start to go through your morning thoughts...

“Oh I must do this...”

“Brush my teeth”

“Get a shower”

“I’m going to have two boiled eggs for breakfast”

“Why is she not awake yet?”

“Where are my slippers?”

“Oh, that looks nice.”

“What was that dream I had last night?”

It's amazing that you can pick up the phone and talk to an old friend or acquaintance that maybe you haven't heard from in some time, but when you ask them what's been going on in their life they will tell you, "not much" or "pretty much the same stuff".

What I am trying to tell you is that unless we choose to make a pre-determination about the direction of our lives we will fall asleep at the wheel and not wake up until it is time to check out. Have you ever done that? You are driving home and or to some location and before you know it, you're there and you don't remember how you got there? I don't want that to happen to you, I want you to be wide awake, making choices about the direction of your life that are motivating, inspiring and full of passion.

Authority Lost, Authority Regained

As a friend of mine use to call it, "Living in Command" and on purpose is a part of who you are as a child of God. You were not created to spend your entire life reacting to circumstances, accommodating people and conditions. Your heavenly Father created you after His image and likeness, which means you have His same DNA.

What this means for you is that you have been given the capacity to be a proactive cause that brings life to your world through your individual uniqueness.

I am discovering that rather than reacting to circumstances, I can become one. I can put myself out there in such a way that people react or respond to me. What this means is that I can become proactive rather

than reactive. Let me ask you a question in order to get this point across. Is God a cause or an effect? The answer, of course, is that God is a cause. He created all that is seen, He created the human race, and, as a result, you and I are the end result of that decision.

Let me take this a step further, because, you and I are created beings, in other words, we are God breathed, He breathed His life into us. Which means we stand apart from all other creation. God has placed His own nature, His very DNA within the fabric of our own lives.

Now in this context let me ask you another question: Did God create you to be an action or to be a reaction in your world? Are you to live your life out proactively or reactively? Now the answer, of course, is to live life proactively and on purpose. Stepping out of your self-limiting beliefs means taking responsibility for your own life. It doesn't mean that you play the blame game. It means taking a harsh look at your own life situation and realizing that your future belongs to you.

Every person who has ever made a significant difference in their world eventually came to this same conclusion at some level. They became passionate about the ideas, beliefs and direction of their lives and choose to live them out.

One of the greatest tragedies in life takes place when we get caught up in the quagmire of mindsets and limiting beliefs about our lives. We waste endless years waiting for the right conditions to happen so that we can get started on our dreams. I think the bottom line is that we are just too scared to get started. Possibly it is because we lack the self belief that we can really pull it off and so it becomes easier to make

excuses. I want to encourage you to live your life with a renewed sense of passion and open abandonment.

I asked one person why they were not moving forward and they told me that they are waiting for a green light. “What’s that mean?” I asked. “It means that I am waiting for a word from the Lord and the right doors to open, I’m not sure that this is God’s will for my life so I am waiting.”

Does that sound familiar to you? I know that it does for me. Not only have I heard this in the past from others but I have spoken those same words myself.

Waiting for green lights where it concerns God’s will and purpose may sound good and “spiritual,” but is that really how God works? Paul the Apostle wasn’t one for waiting around for green lights. He was quite zealous and passionate about the directions of his life. He didn’t sit around much waiting for green lights. In fact after he met the Lord on the road to Damascus where he was converted, he immediately set out to preach Christ in the synagogues. Galatians 1:16 tells us that he didn’t confer with flesh and blood, which simply means that he didn’t check with men about what to preach! Granted, his zealousness did get him into trouble, but he was never one to let grass grow under his feet trying to decide whether he should go.

What I am suggesting here is that when you look at all the examples in the New Testament regarding getting direction from God for your life, you should always assume that you have a green light and only stop if you have a red light.

CHOOSING LIFE INSTEAD OF LIFE CHOOSING YOU

Why should you assume this? Jesus gave you the “Go Ye” signal two thousand years ago to live a fulfilled empowered life. Jesus not only gave you a green light but He gave you the authority to live it out to completion. He said, “Go into all the world and preach the good news”. What is this good news He told us to share? It is that I am now fully qualified by God’s free gift of grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live my life and core desires out in an effective way.

Colossians 1:13 tells us that God *has “delivered us out of the power of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”* This passage in the Bible tells us that God has already, past tense, delivered you and I out of the power of darkness and now we are living in the Kingdom of Light.

There is an old poem called: “I Bargained with Life for a Penny” which says it very well.

I bargained with Life for a penny,
And Life would pay no more,
However I begged at evening
When I counted my scanty store.

For Life is a just employer,
He gives you what you ask,
But once you have set the wages,
Why, you must bear the task.

I worked for a menial’s hire,
Only to learn, dismayed,
That any wage I had asked of Life,
Life would have willingly paid.

Written by Jessie Belle Rittenhouse

Simply thinking, hoping, praying, wishing and longing for something or some goal without inspired action is useless and non-productive. Taking inspired action that is based on correct knowledge takes courage and is a gift that God has given you, but it is a decision that only you can make.

Making the decision to become a condition and not being controlled by the conditions and influences in your world where it concerns what you really want is what I desire for your life.

Inspired Action Steps: What one thing awakened in you as you read this chapter? Whatever it is, write it down, and think about how it relates to your life. Read the first two chapters of Ephesians. Underline what is already declared as yours.



Chapter 3

God's Ultimate Desire and Purpose for You

The question of knowing your purpose in life is something every human being has been faced with at one time or another in their life. Millions of people search the Internet for some term related to the word “purpose” each month. There is an average of 246,000 searches done each month on just the words “Purpose Life” alone. Granted, there are those who have been convinced that they are a product of some evolutionary process and that their plight is to simply exist. But today’s science is rapidly demonstrating otherwise, that in fact we are here not by accident but by an intentional force outside of ourselves.

This is an important question about your perceptions where it concerns our creator’s purpose for humanity. I realize that maybe you have never thought about this; maybe you don’t have any religious background or frame of reference regarding this question. In fact, you may have had a rather negative viewpoint and I can’t say that I blame

you. There are a lot of reasons to be turned off by religion; people can get pretty twisted when it comes to religion.

What I can promise you as I try to bring some clarity about your purpose in the context of God is that you will be truly amazed as you discover His full intention for your life. Let me start off by asking you a question so that we can come to some important conclusions. No matter what your background or faith, what do you think is God's greatest purpose for humanity? I have picked some possible common answers that I have heard throughout the years about God's purpose.

Here are four possible choices.

To serve God

Obedience

Adoration and Love

To Glorify the Lord

Some people would answer that God desires all of the above; others would point out the merits of one or two. One thing I would suggest deals with a major misconception about God and His purpose in our lives. That misunderstanding is the belief that producing right behavior in the end is what God desires. This simply is not true. This has been the primary message preached by many religions. Under the Old Covenant, which means old agreement, Israel related to God through the Mosaic Covenant, which was based upon the keeping of the Law. The law served only one purpose, and that was that it brought condemnation and guilt. The Law represented a list of 613 laws that

were impossible to live out. It served to remind Israel, and now us, that a life lived based strict adherence to obedience was impossible.

Right behavior in the end cannot stand on its own, it does not necessarily glorify God. If it did, then our own efforts would be what saves us, not God's. What about adoration and love? Jesus did tell us to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind” We can’t discount the power of loving God as part of our purpose but I think that there is an even clearer answer and that is that humanities greatest purpose is to simply glorify God. Now before you think that I am about to bring out a list of do’s and don’ts, let me explain what that really means.

Taking Clues from Creation

The book of Romans tells us that when we look at creation God can be seen and understood. This speaks of every aspect of our universe and world, and even includes you. From this scripture we can see a clue to answering the question concerning God’s highest purpose for our lives.

“Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,”

(Romans 1:19,20)

Since this passage tells us that the invisible attributes of God can be seen in His creation, let's look at how the creation demonstrates and glorifies God. The book of Psalms talks about the heavens and stars glorifying God, let's read to see how.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.”

(Psalms 19:1-3)

“Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light!”

Psalms 148:3

These scriptures tell us here that the stars and planets right now are praising God! In fact it says here that they are uttering speech and that we can hear their voices right now! Now, I don't want to be too dramatic here, but when was the last time you stepped outdoors and listened intently for some sound from the sky? If you try it, don't tell your neighbor what you're doing because they might think you're crazy. Actually the voice you hear is not heard through your ears but through your eyes. You won't hear the stars and moon hooting and hollering with your ears, but if you could hear them, the sound would be deafening.

So, how are the stars and planets glorifying God? Simple, they are functioning to their capacity! This is how all of creation glorifies God, it functions and does what it was created to do. This includes not only the stars in the heavens but all of nature. That includes every mountain,

hill, valley and meadow down to the smallest of drop of dew that falls off the edge of a flower petal. Every species that exist in this world of ours magnifies and glorifies God when it is functioning to its capacity! From the roar of a lion to the baa of a new born lamb, God is hearing their voice and receiving pleasure from it.

Let me ask you, just how difficult do you think it is for the stars to glorify God? Not difficult at all is it? In fact it is simple. Now let me ask you the same question about every other aspect of nature, how much do you think it struggles in its attempt to glorify God? Take for instance the apple tree, do you think it is groaning and moaning each time it pushes out an apple on the end of one of its limbs? I think that it is safe to say that it isn't very difficult at all for an apple tree to do what it was designed to do; it is simply functioning to its capacity.

What Gives God His Greatest Buzz

What do you think gives God a buzz? I mean, think about it, there are things in our life that give us great pleasure, so why should God be any different? Maybe you have never stopped to think about that before. Some would argue that God is self existent so He really doesn't need anything in order to find pleasure. We know that this isn't true because scriptures point out that God has emotions and that He gets pleasure from His creation. The amazing thing is that He created this amazing world and it is continually exalting, praising and glorifying His majesty every second of every day. And then He placed humanity in the middle of all of it and told them to live out their capacity by discovering it. Did you realize that God gets a kick out of our discovering His creation?

**Paradise Was Not Just Meant To Be a
Garden, It Was to Be a Planet**

Yes, it all started in a Garden, Gods purpose for man was to search out, discover and expand the Garden of Eden throughout the entire planet. His instruction was quite plain: replenish (or fill up) the earth and subdue it. He also gave them the power to carry out that assignment. Adam's job was to exercise his God-given authority and expand that Garden until it encompassed the entire planet.

There is a word that is often misunderstood but which really speaks of the way things functioned before the fall. That word is righteousness, and it represents the truth and reality of God's kingdom. The word righteousness was formally spelled; "rightwiseness," which gives us a better understanding of what this word means to us in the English language. It means the faithfulness and truthfulness of God which is consistent to His own nature and His own promises to us. Let me state it this way, righteousness is the full and complete measure of the revealed will of God to your life. It really means, quite literally "as it should be". That is the way it was in the Garden, everything functioned within the full capacity of that which it was designed and created to be.

Modern science would have you believe that the first man and woman wore a monkey suit and spoke only in a one syllable word:, UGH! We know that this is not true; the Bible tells us that Adam had an incredible capacity. It tells us that God brought every beast of the field and every bird of the air to Adam to see what he would name them. Other ancient writings suggest that the first people never knew hunger, thirst or even darkness, that they were surrounded by a

brightness of light at all times. The frailties of the body and age were never known. Their eyes could see both their physical world and spiritual world as one complete picture. They experienced the coming and going of God's angelic host, singing praises to God Almighty as a normal part of their everyday life experience.

The thing that I want to point out here is that Adam and Eve acted and functioned outside of their reality. They had no memory or awareness of what it would be like to act otherwise. They had no thoughts of trepidation, fear, lack or hesitation. They could act out of an abundance mindset effortlessly because that is all they had ever known. Lack or a sense of incompleteness was not in their minds or vocabulary.

Their connection to life 'as it should be' was as natural and unconscious for them as breathing is for us. It was out of this awareness that they lived effortlessly on a day to day basis.

This is an incredible thought when you really consider it. It shows us much concerning how each of us lives our life. We each live out of our own sense of reality just as Adam and Eve did.

We of course can look around at our world and see that things are not as they should be. Whether it is our culture and society or our personal lives, we know firsthand that things are not working correctly. For thousands of years from the time of Adam and Eve, mankind has really been disconnected from God. In fact, they lost the very power and ability to reflect the true purpose and nature of their creator. I am sure that there were stories told from one generation to another about

how Adam and Eve, their distant great grandparents, lived in the Garden before they chose to disconnect themselves from God and live an independent life that was absent of the “as it should be of God.” Some of the stories that they heard must have been incredible, you know. What must have it been like to live without limitations on an Earth that had no curse on it?

As generations passed I am sure that many of these memories became faint. And even if they could remember the “as it should be of God” on the Earth and how it was to be lived out, it was a life that could never through their own effort be regained in their lost and fallen state. To be honest, I don’t think that we today have any idea of the reality of life before the rebellion in the Garden of Eden. Really, our frame of reference of what it means to live a life without limitation has become completely distorted by our own world view and experience.

Our outside world view contains and restricts us because it is based upon the beliefs of our experiences and perceptions, which are very much subjective. In other words, instead of living a life of limitless possibilities we have learned to live in limitation. The sad thing about this is that we accept this as normal for ourselves without even realizing God’s full intention for our lives.

It was this same distorted viewpoint that Israel held and which led them to believe that they could bring God’s kingdom back into their lives through the keeping of the law, when in fact the law was only meant to show them and us the futility of trying to bring about the “as it should be of God” into the Earth and our lives independent of allowing His life to be lived in and through us.

Jesus came to introduce to us a new and better way. In the Sermon on the Mount He spoke about the righteousness of God. He told His hearers that they that hunger and thirst for the “as it should be of God” will be filled. Later in this same passage of scripture we see Jesus talking to the religious people of His time. It was the Scribes and Pharisees who wrongly relied upon using the law, through force, manipulation and coercion, to not only live righteously but to control people.

Jesus told His hearers that “unless your righteousness exceeds their attempts to be righteous, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. It is important that you get what Jesus was saying here. The “as it should be of God” is nothing that can be possessed or compared to the self-exertion of our own lives outside of the gift of God’s righteousness that He freely gave to us through His son Jesus Christ. Keep in mind, we typically constrain and define God’s gift of righteousness as only affecting us within our spiritual lives. In other words, God saves us, He redeems us, we have a confidence that we are going to heaven. But we should be careful not to limit this gift of His righteousness to just a spiritual effect in our lives. In reality the “As it should be of God” is something that needs to be grasped for every area of our lives: our health, our finances, our relationships, the fears which we face on a day to day basis. Bottom line; don’t limit God concerning his perfect provision for your life. Listen and hear God’s declaration over your life regarding the “as it should be” of God. God looks upon you through the gift of His righteousness which is now yours.

Scientists today tell us that we only are using a small part of our possible mental and physical resources. We likely can all agree that we

are capable of a whole lot more. The question is, how is this supposed to happen? Is it possible that we have been going about this thing called life the wrong way? What I want to suggest is that we examine the possibilities that has been made available to us but of which we may not be even aware.

Growing up and living in a world that predisposes me to a life of limitation...

Think about it, we have no frame of reference where it concerns living a life without limitation. Although Jesus lived before us as the example of the way things should be, I think we miss much of what He was trying to communicate to us in the way He lived.

What drives and motivates us is different from what drove and motivated Adam and Eve. In the same way what drove and motivated Jesus is also very much different from what drives and motivates our world today. I will share more with you later in this book about this but suffice it to say, you can have the same inner peace and inner strength that enables you to live a life of complete and absolute freedom. Freed from the dictates of your world around you, you will discover a new and different way of living that is as close to living in paradise as Adam and Eve or Jesus Himself.

A Slow and Painful Death

Maybe you have heard the story of how to kill a frog without it's realizing what is happening. It is said to be a myth, but nonetheless makes a great anecdote for the point I am about to make. The story goes that if you drop a live frog into cold water and then heat it up very

slowly, the frog will sit there in the water until it dies from the heat. (Of course, if you dropped a frog into hot water it would immediately try to escape.)

The point for us behind this story is that our minds are continually making adjustments which are creating new levels of “normal” in our lives. It happens so slowly that we are completely unaware of the changes. Our world is full of stories of great people who were overcome by life’s circumstances to the point that living homeless and eating out of a dumpster in an alleyway became perfectly normal and acceptable to them.

Each person on Earth was raised in a completely different environment of circumstances, which means that your normal is different from my normal. Every culture and subculture has been and is continually being influenced by what is commonly held to be acceptable, to become anything different is to experience peer or family resistance.

If we are capable of these changes in just a few years of our life experience, where have thousands of years of adaptation brought the human race today? What possible falsehoods have we come to believe and accept as truth? We can certainly agree that we have become highly skilled in the ways in which we have learned to live, but what I am suggesting, as I pointed out before, is that perhaps God has a better way.

The Bible shows us that when Adam and Eve chose to disconnect themselves from God they immediately experienced an utter sense of

loss. Everything that they had known as normal was suddenly and completely shut off from them. Oh, the sheer horror, pain and agony that they must have experienced in that one moment! The utter suddenness of this inescapable cataclysmic event must have shaken them to the core of their beings. Imagine yourself being brought to the edge of a 20 story building and then stepping off without knowing if you were going to be saved.

We assume that they immediately knew how and where to get food to feed the depth of hunger and thirst that they were possibly experiencing for the first time. We assume that they knew what darkness and night were like, but never think that possibly for the first time Adam and Eve could not see each other because the brightness that surrounded them was now gone. We don't know this for sure, but because their world around them was continually full of light they might not have realized 12 hours of total darkness prior to this. When darkness came, for all they knew they might never be allowed to see each other or their world ever again. Physical sensitivity to the elements was experienced for the first time in their lives.

God's words of warning must have echoed in their minds: "...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." They may have asked themselves, "Is this the death that we were warned of, or is this just the beginning?"

At no other time prior to this had anyone experienced or even remotely faced the kind of instant pain, suffering and devastation that came as a result of being separated from God. From this time forward children were born into a world that was changed. The cold instant

reality of that one moment of ceasing from God's life would never be experience by any one human being on Earth again, that is, until around four thousand years later when God himself willingly stepped into our world in the form of a man and took upon himself the sin of the entire world.

It was God's full and complete intention from the beginning to get His man back, and He was willing to do what was necessary to accomplish it. In fact He spoke it to the serpent in Genesis 3:15 when He said that Eve's offspring would ultimately bruise his head in total victory.

Inspired Action Steps: What jumped out at you in this chapter?
Write down what it means for you.

What is your paradise?



Chapter 4

Self-Actualization and God-Actualization

So what is God's purpose for mankind? We know that it is to restore humanity back to His original intention, to have a family that expresses the image and likeness of God in the Earth. I would have to say that the answer is that our purpose is to glorify God. And how do we glorify him? It is when we are living and functioning to the capacity He built into each of us.

From the beginning of time God wanted a family, and through Jesus we are now able to live out the "As it should be of God" in the Earth. It is Jesus Christ expressing His life in and through you that gives God His greatest glory!

In the early part of this century Psychologist Abraham Maslow and others in the field of modern psychology coined the term "self-actualization." What is self-actualization? It basically means the full realization of one's own potential. Think of an artist who simply cannot help but create art because that is who he or she is. A composer or pianist cannot help but live out of the expression of who they are, so they create music.

History records the stories of individuals like Mozart and Rembrandt who realized their own gifts and chose to embrace who they were. People are at all times seeking to actualize themselves at some level. This is what psychologists discovered, the desire for self-fulfillment is in all of us. How does this take place, where does it come from? I believe it to be part of the DNA of how God created us. The question is, can man, as he is, truly self-actualize himself outside of God? Some would say yes, after all we have the examples of many people who have lived lives that seem to exemplify this.

This is really a testament to God, because if man is currently self-fulfilling, what are the possibilities for a world of people who embrace their need to connect fully to their creator?

In Psalms 8:3-9 we read a powerful passage of scripture that amazes me every time I read it. It speaks of the majesty of God creating man just a little lower than himself and empowering him with authority. Even though this scripture in the King James Version of the Bible uses the phrase that man “*was made a little lower than angels,*” the word here for angel is *Elohim*. Elohim in the Hebrew language is correctly translated as “God.”

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
For You have made him a little lower than the *angels*, (emphasis mine)
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under His feet,
All sheep and oxen—

Even the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea
That pass through the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth!

This passage of scripture is from the Old Testament and speaks of God's intention for humanity. It demonstrates an awe of wonder and a consideration as to why God would invest His nature and image into a created being. Man was not created to be some mindless ape that only acts like every other ape in the jungle. No, humanity, even in its fallen state from God's glory, has the ability to actualize itself to a great degree.

If this was God's intention from the beginning it is certainly God's intention today. God's desire is that there would be nothing that would separate us from living this quality of life that comes from having a deep and abiding relationship with Him.

God is always Self-Actualizing Himself

This is probably one of the most powerful truths you can come to understand about God. I remember a television commercial a number of years ago: It started out with a man walking through a black and white outdoor scene. As he walked, things began to happen, the grey shadows of grass around his feet would suddenly turn bright colors of green. Dark flowers would blossom and turn into full color brilliance. Everything around this person dramatically changed from black and white as he walked down the path, and everywhere he walked stuff

happened. It was like life was taking place as a natural consequence of the steps he took. I was immediately reminded that this is how God is. God actualizes himself on a moment by moment basis simply because of who He is. He demonstrates magnificence and beauty as a natural consequence of simply showing up. From a super Nova that spins out new stars to the buzz He gets from watching you express life in unique ways, He is being magnified. Instead of begging and pleading with God to use you, understand that God is dynamic – not static. This is the unforced rhythms of grace that Jesus was talking about in the passage I quoted in the introduction. “keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

I want you to stop reading for a moment and take a few moments to imagine God’s glory shining through your life right now. In your minds eye, see whatever you are most passionate about being expressed through your life to the world around you.

If you have a heart to see people touched in a specific way, see yourself doing it right now. If you love creating things, see yourself creating right now. Take a few moments and close your eyes for a few minutes and begin to envision Jesus expressing life out to your world around you. God’s divine ability and glory is there right there with you now to lead you into personally experiencing a quality of life you have never experienced before. As you see yourself expressing Jesus to the world through your unique design, begin to intensify what you are seeing and feeling. Let’s say you start out at a level one, I want you to move what you are experiencing up to a level ten. See and experience God’s life flowing through you in intentional and unique ways that really excite you and give you a buzz.

Now use the power of your words and say out loud, “I am unique and special; God’s excellence is shining in and through my life!”

We all start out in life dreaming, imagining all manner of possibilities for our lives, and you know what, we are not afraid. In one moment through the use of the imagination we are jumping, running and flying through the air in a universe without limitations.

Nothing, and I mean nothing, holds us back, no matter what physical limitations may be surrounding us. We knew this as children, that physical limitations had no power or influence over the dreams and imaginings of our hearts.

Now as adults, we lose sight of that innate ability to use our imaginations as the reality (at least that is what we call it) of the world we are experiencing sets in around us. Where do limitations come from? We know that they come from beliefs that have been established in our hearts. These beliefs are the consequences of life experiences, starting from when we were in the womb. The bottom line is that none of us grow up in a perfect environment. We are all born into a world that has walked away from God’s purpose and design.

The Scripture points this out and says, “*All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.*” (Romans 3:23). If stated another way it might say that all humanity has lost the source of life and as a result now lives in dysfunction. In other words, we have lost our bearings and because we are now cut off and estranged from the very fountain of life itself, we have no other choice but to look for life from our outside world experience.

Jesus said, “*I have come that you might have life and to have that life in abundance*” (John 10:10). This is the Good News message that we in this generation must hear. We who were at one time alienated, separated from God are now brought near to God through the blood of Jesus Christ. This means that we have the power to live lives of endless possibilities. God’s desire is that you discover this as truth. That you will move out of and from a life that has been restrictive and based upon a dysfunctional world view, move away from fear and hesitation and begin to learn how to live, and I mean really live, according to God’s design and what He desires for you.

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples; “*Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom*”(Luke 12:32). Keep in mind here that He was not just promising some heavenly abode when we die. Jesus came to restore that which was lost and more, He came to give back to man the ability to live a life of limitless possibilities. This is really incredible when you actually begin to understand the full implications of what took place.

The Gospels have several references to the kingdom of heaven. One of the first is found in Matthew 3:2.. It tells us that John the Baptist went about preaching, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*” I find this interesting because of our typical understanding of not only John the Baptist but the meaning of the words, “repent”. Many people picture John the Baptist as a man who was a scrubby, wild-eyed looking fellow who lived in the desert, and who screamed and frightened people, like one of those screaming New York street preacher types who are telling everyone that they are going to go to hell

if they don't repent. Stick with me here because I want you to re-examine how you might have viewed this in the past.

Later in Matthew 4:17 we see a reference of Jesus doing the same thing as John the Baptist. It tells us that, "*From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"

When we hear the words repent, we typically associate it to feelings that are negative or bad or something to be avoided. The words "repent" here simply means to change your mind about something. We do this on an ongoing basis as a part of our daily experience. You may have changed your mind (thinking) already about a number of things while reading this book.

So, if repentance is simply changing our thinking and beliefs about something, what is it that John the Baptist and Jesus want us to change our minds about?

Looking at these two passages of scripture we see that their message has to do with how we view "the kingdom of God" being at hand. That means that people previous to this had not seen God's kingdom as something that had already taken place and that existed in the present, but they believed that it was to be somewhere in the future. It is interesting to note that that Jesus talked about this when He said the following:

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."

(Matthew 11:12)

These same words of Jesus were also recorded by Luke the Physician in Luke 16:16. This passage gives us a little more understanding what Jesus was talking about here, *“The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.”*

What this tells us is that up until the time of Jesus, men had been violently attempting to enter the kingdom. The Amplified Bible says that they sought to share in the heavenly kingdom “with most ardent zeal and intense exertion”. This reflects the mindset that to enter the kingdom of heaven requires much effort. Under the Old Covenant it was in the keeping of the law that made man right. Jesus showed us the impossibility of this when He answered the question from the rich young ruler, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” The obvious answer given was to “keep the commandments,” to which the young ruler answered, “All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?”

In current day language this is the rough equivalent of responding with, "Ok, ok, I got that in the bag, no problem, but what can I "DO"? Give me something to "DO"! Jesus, knowing where his heart was, answered him with, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

The law reflected man’s doing something in and of himself in order to earn God’s forgiveness and acceptance. This is the ardent pursuit of all religion, to bring God’s kingdom to Earth through zeal and intense exertion. This is what John the Baptist and Jesus was referring to when

they instructed their hearers to repent about how they thought about how the kingdom of heaven was to be attained. It was no longer to be sought after through the effort of keeping and maintaining the law (right behavior) through their own works. The message was not “You filthy sinner, you must repent of your deeds in order to inherit the kingdom.” No, the message that Jesus came to bring was: “Change your thinking about how you have been trying to approach the kingdom through your ardent exertion and effort. If it could be had by your effort, there would be no need for me to come. The good news is that the kingdom has now come to you! It hasn’t come because of ANYTHING you have done; it is the result of the gift of my life for you.”

Think about the power of this statement for your life. It is almost too incredible to believe or accept. Jesus here is telling you that you no longer have to chase and pursue God! Why? Because the kingdom of God is going to chase and pursue you! We write books about being God chasers, but in fact it is God who is chasing us with His goodness and mercy.

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Romans 14:17)

What is this passage saying? It tells us that to receive and partake of God’s kingdom, you are not to do it through your effort. What God gives us is a free gift that requires no payment whatsoever! This is the good news of the gospel; in fact that is what “Good News” means. It is God showing up on our behalf and doing what you and I were unable to do or accomplish. How do you receive this free gift? You simply

change your mind about trusting in your own efforts and strength and say “Thank you, I receive it!” I realize that this stands in complete opposition to what we have come to believe about God.

Romans 5:15 in the Amplified version starts out like this, “*But God’s free gift is not at all to be compared to the trespass [His grace is out of all proportion to the fall of man]. That is a good description of how God shows up in our lives; “Out of all proportion.”* In other words, it can’t be compared at all, in any degree, to the sin or trespass that Adam committed. This was the only sin that brought condemnation to you, it has nothing to do with how you and I measure up.

You might argue that this gives people a license to sin, that they can do anything they wish without fear. My answer to this is, “Since when do people need a license to sin?” People do what they do because they want to, it is because of the error in man’s thinking regarding how life is to be lived. In the above passage we see God showing up in the form of human flesh, He takes upon Himself the Sin of the world and sets us free to live a life of freedom that is completely out of proportion - beyond anything we can imagine.

As we trust in the life He gives us, He shows up and actualizes Himself in and through us in incredible and unique ways.

Inspired Action Steps: Make a list of things that motivate you and give you a buzz in life. Don’t just stop there, dig deeper into ways you believe God wants to actualize Himself through you. Be careful not to disqualify yourself before you have an opportunity to start.



Chapter 5

Gods Greatest Purpose For Your Life

It is Jesus Christ expressing His life in and through you that you find your highest purpose and that is what gives God His greatest glory! The expression of His life in us is unique and different for each of us, and that expression has unlimited potential!

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”

(I Peter 2:9)

The word “praises” in the above verse is a very interesting word; it comes from the Greek word *Arête*, which can be translated as goodness, or as excellence of any kind! In other places throughout the New Testament this word is translated as “virtue” and “excellence”. The ancient Greeks applied the word to anything: for example, the excellence of a chimney, the excellence of a bull to be bred and the excellence of a man. The meaning of the word changes depending on

what it describes. Since everything has its own peculiar excellence; the *arête* of a man is different from the *arête* of a horse. The word *arête* is actually where we get the word aristocrat, which really means the superior or noble.

The superiority or nobility of humanity is one thing when compared to other things in the world; each has its own *arête*. The *arête* of man is vastly different from nature around us or the house you live in because they have their own excellence. Humanity stands apart as unique and different from the world we live in. Even though you could say that all humanity shares similarities, there is the *Arête* of the individual as well. Some people discover and live out their *arête* while others don't. The fact is that each of us has built-in potential that craves expression. We equip ourselves, we train and practice and then we become excellent in that thing that gives us satisfaction. The superiority and nobility of that person shines out to the world for all to see.

In watching the winter Olympic Games of 2010 it was obvious that for the athlete there is no straight line course to the Olympics. There are twists and turns along the way. I always stand in awe of the athletes who have found the courage to follow their passions and publicly push themselves beyond what most of us could ever imagine. Their dedication and discipline are amazing. Some of the personal stories behind these athletes are even more amazing.

For example, in past Olympics we've heard stories about some of the members of the gymnastics team from China, taken from their families at a very early age – as early as age three – to live in a boarding school for gymnasts. Family reunions took place only twice a

year. The end result is that their years of sacrifice, dedication and discipline prepared them to become the world-class athletes they are today...and to take the team gold medal!

Here in I Peter 2:9 it not only speaks of you and I as being champions reaching and displaying the arête of man but it goes on to add another powerful element, the arête of God! This scripture proclaims that you are chosen, you are part of a royal priesthood, and you are holy and special! And this passage doesn't stop there but goes on to declare an additional element coming into play here - that you should show forth the arête of God!

Think of the value and beauty of a diamond, it is wondrous to behold. But it isn't until the light shines upon it that its true beauty is seen. The colors of blue, green, red and yellow are seen shining out from its center in unique and special ways. God is like that, the DNA of God's beauty shines in and through our lives.

Take, for instance, a chair. It has a specific purpose. I can set a chair out in the middle of a room to show it off. I can admire its structure and the craftsmanship of its creator. But it isn't until I put it to the use for which it was designed that it will it take on its real meaning. It is when I sit in the chair that it is able to function to its capacity.

And where it concerns people, we are not at all like a chair. Each and every one of us are complex and unique! Isn't it interesting that out of the 6.5 billion human beings on planet Earth, not one of us has the same fingerprint, iris or retina? You are here to express in your own unique way, from your own perspective, and you get to choose the

vehicles you use to express yourself. The gift of free will has been given to each of us, and in every moment, we have the power to choose what we want to believe and think, and from the root of our beliefs will sprout the fruits of our reality. When we allow Him, God sits in the chair of our lives and shines the brilliant light of His glory out to the world for all to see and when He does... He smiles and takes great pleasure! Remember the words of Jesus I shared with you in the last chapter? “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom!”

Walk from this place different. You are a unique individual, and there is a song inside of you that is waiting to be sung!

Man Was Born To Dream

Man was born to dream marvelous things, to envision the impossible. Without this, purpose would have no foothold in life. She would be left with no handle to grasp onto in order to pull herself out of the realm of the unachievable. It is this thing called desire which gives life and energy to all who will listen and hold her close.

One of God's greatest gifts to mankind in the beginning of time was the ability to dream, to envision, and to hope.

Ah... dreams, the marketplace of life is full of them, left behind by some wayward soul who thought they could never be. Cumbersome weights cast aside, while all along it was those very hopes and dreams which would have given hoist to the sails of purpose and brought about unrealities once thought lost.

Man was created from the beginning to dream and have purpose; he was designed for growth and achievement. Without it man becomes orn from within, like a ship built for the sea with no place to go, dry-docked, never realizing what it was created to be.

Our streets are full of the cries of the young and old who are lost for purpose; they yearn from within to find their destinies. Take account of yourself, do you have purpose? Do you have focus toward a desired end? A man without a dream, without purpose, is one who will never be able to experience all that life has to offer.

Take stock of your world, look and you will see that everything that God created was designed with purpose, to have purpose. All of creation speaks forth the nature and magnificence of God. Life, no matter how small it may seem to be, has contained within it the seeds of purpose, a pre-set, pre-determined course of action. From the smallest insect to the largest of animals, you will find within a built in system of purpose and direction.

Did you ever notice that when God created this world and universe that He created everything within it to grow and expand? Think about it... from the seed in the ground that continually reproduces to every living creature that is on our planet, and according to the scientists, even to the universe itself, everything, and I mean everything, is continuously expanding. That is because when God created this world, He placed the fingerprint of His DNA within it and gave it the ability to expand, to grow, to multiply.

Do you remember those words out of the book of Genesis that say “and let the Earth bring forth... grass, herb, seed, fruit tree, living

creatures, fish, birds... And He said, let them bring forth after its kind? This law of expansion is continuously at work all around us. It is an undeniable truth that surrounds us each and every day.

Now, it seems easy for us to accept this as truth when looking at our universe and we can even admit to its reality when looking at others around us. But what do you say and believe about yourself?

Getting Out of Wheelchairs

This past year I attended a business meeting that was held in a local hotel. I went to learn new things that would help me in my own business, but the real value I was to receive that day never came from inside the room or from any instructor, instead, it happened outside the meeting room at the check-in table.

The man behind the table that was handing out name tags was sitting in a wheel chair. As I started to walk away from the table, the Lord spoke to me and I saw myself approaching the man and kicking the wheel of his wheelchair and asking him, "So, when are you going to decide to get out of that thing?" I knew that it was a prompting from the Lord to do this, so I did exactly what I saw in my mind. I walked up to his wheelchair and kicked it and asked him the question.

You would have thought that he would have become shocked and angry with a perfect stranger being so disrespectful. But God knew exactly what he needed to hear. He looked up at me and responded that he was able to stand, but not for very long because of the pain. I talked with him about the power of his God-given imagination and how to see

himself walking, jumping and doing the things he would like to do. He responded that he was a Catholic and knew that in God's time it would happen.

As I continued to talk with him about getting out of his wheelchair the Holy Spirit spoke to me and asked me a question. "So Scott, when are you going to decide to get out of your wheelchair of poverty?" In an instant, I knew that I had been set up and this whole thing was orchestrated by God for my behalf to get my attention. I walked away from that meeting with a lesson I will never forget.

That next morning I was determined to walk out of my wheelchair of poverty, so I went for a long stroll in our neighborhood. I stood in an open field and imagined myself tearing that wheelchair into a thousand pieces and crushing it to dust. I can tell you that in the mind of my imagination, what was taking place was as real as real can be. It was a very emotional experience as I determined in my heart that this would never be an issue in my life again for as long as I lived. I imagined the wheelchair of poverty disappearing in the rearview mirror of my car as I spoke out. "I don't ever want to see even one faint spot of you left in my sight". From that moment forward, I began to look at and see myself differently! Instead of me chasing money, I would see money chasing me. My perspective completely began to change about the free gift of God's righteousness (as it should be) and what it personally met for my life. I began to see myself seated and positioned in heavenly places, having been made complete in Him.

The fact of the matter is that we all have wheelchairs that we have been sitting in. I don't know what yours is but this one thing I do know,

God wants you to get out of that thing and destroy the influence that it has had over your life.

Solomon wrote in the book of Proverbs 4:23 to *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”* The word for issue here in the original Hebrew text is actually the word for boundaries or borders. We all have created borders within our hearts and it is these borders that maintain what we have accepted as the status quo. It is part of that conditioning we have accepted as our sense of normal. It’s not necessarily a bad thing and it’s not necessarily a good thing. It all depends on what you have held onto as truth in your life that has created boundaries and borders.

You see, the most dangerous thing in our lives is not the unfamiliar, it is the familiar. It is those things that we have become accustomed to, it is those things that we have embraced and claimed as our own.

I talked to a couple in Church one night. They told me the story of a horrible auto accident that almost took the life of the husband. He barely survived and it took many months of healing and therapy to get back to some small measure of being able to function again. But, this was just a small part of the damage. You see, in the accident he had suffered a certain amount of brain damage and as a result his personality had changed. This couple explained to me that all of their friends and family had abandoned them because of significant changes in his personality; he was just not the same person that he once had been.

Now, I don't know what changes in his personality could have caused their friends and family to reject them; I simply listened as they told me their story. They went on to tell me that they had gone for prayer many times, attended many miracle crusades over the years without any changes resulting.

Being prompted by the Holy Spirit, I told him that his healing had nothing to do with the physical limitations or personality changes that he was experiencing. His difficulty was all about what he had gone through for the last few years and with which he had allowed himself to become familiar. This wasn't a story about someone else, it was about him. Certainly, something that is as traumatic as this can have a tremendous effect on a person's inner heart belief.

The difference between trying to get healing and being healed is in the word "ownership". If your heart (subconscious mind) has become exposed to something long enough, it becomes accustomed to the current situation and treats those circumstances as normal. This is what ownership is, it is the feeling or sense of possession. If a person sits in a wheelchair for very long, they eventually grow accustomed to sitting there. After about 90 days, try taking the chair away from them and watch the hair stand up on the back of their neck.

Inspired Action Steps: What has been your wheelchair? Once you identify it, recognize it for what it is. Realize that this is not the thing that has been stopping you, that perhaps it has been something else.

EMPOWERED

What have you believed about yourself that has been stopping you?
Take some action steps right now (no matter how small) that you can immediately begin to apply to your life.



Chapter 6

The Imprinting of the Heart

Have you ever heard someone using this phrase, “If it quacks like a duck and walks like a duck, then it must be a duck?” People often use that phrase when referring to or defining someone’s character - who they are representing themselves to be. A person may look like and claim themselves to be someone else but there is no denying the actions of a person. For example, say a woman claims and believes that she is an honest person but her actions tell a different story. You see she has been caught in lies on a number of occasions. What would you say? Is she a dishonest person or is she the honest person she thinks she is?

Scientists who study certain animals say that there is a thing called imprinting that happens in the brain. It is something that takes place when these animals are first born or very young. Imprinting is a term that describes how many animals decide who they are, their self concepts. For instance, a duckling is imprinted with the self concept of itself as a duck within 13 to 16 hours of being born. Birds of prey are imprinted within their first 2 to 5 weeks of life.

In animal behavior studies, scientists placed a newborn duckling into a pen with a mother hen, a chicken. Interestingly enough, after a short time the duck began to think that the chicken was its mother and that it was a chicken too. They then took that little duckling and put him into a holding pen full of chickens. All of the chickens knew right away that this duck was not a chicken, and as a result nearly pecked that poor duckling to death. The poor duckling couldn't understand why everyone was mad.

They eventually took the duckling out of the chicken pen and put him into the pen with all the other ducks and you know what? Nobody picked on that duckling; they accepted him as one of their own. The problem was that the duckling wasn't happy and tried to escape. This poor duckling would continually fly about the pen looking and searching for a way to get back to the chickens.

Now, this may give you some idea just how powerful this thing called the imprinting process can be. This initial experience of this duckling was literally imprinted into the very fiber of the nervous system of this little animal. The amazing thing about this imprinting process in small animals is that it is irreversible; it cannot be changed once it takes place. Now as humans we are different, we can make choices and changes about ourselves; cognitive thinking comes into play here concerning the imprinting that has taken place in our lives.

But, it is still not all that easy, even for us humans. Paul the Apostle in Romans chapter two did tell us, "Be not conformed to this world." Being conformed is the imprinting process that has taken place in our lives. What Paul was saying is to not be conformed to this world's way

of thinking, its culture or beliefs about limitations and how we go about compensating for our sense of lack, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

You see, being conformed is really referring to that imprinting that has taken place in all of our lives. The sad truth is that even though we have the ability and the power to change that imprinting in our lives, most people have already adapted to this early childhood programming. Most people won't question whether what they are experiencing is really "normal" or if there could possibly be something different than their current experience. Every one of us was born into the cultural environment of a home, a family, a socioeconomic influence that has imprinted a message of self-limiting beliefs. Not only are there self-limiting beliefs about our self concept and identity but there are ingrained beliefs that tell us how to get what we want in life, how to get our needs met on a day to day basis, those emotional needs and the other needs that we experience throughout our entire lives. This imprinting has become so deeply embedded within our psyche that we are for the most part not even aware of it.

The book of Jeremiah in the Old Testament of the Bible has some amazing things to say about this. It tells us that "the heart is deceitful above all things and is desperately wicked, who can know it?" When referring to the heart here in this passage of scripture, it is speaking of the subconscious mind. This scripture here calls the heart, "woefully wicked," which in the original Hebrew language is translated as weak or sick. The word deceitful in this passage can be translated quite literally as "tracked by footprints". If you read this passage in the literal translation it would say, "The heart is woefully sick and above all

showing footprints”. Isn’t that amazing? What does this say about our lives? It means that our self-concept can be out of touch with reality and we can end up in the holding pen with all of the other chickens. It also means that if you accept yourself as you are (present tense), then that is where you most likely are going to remain in your life.

This is the purpose of this book - to assist you in raising the veil of a new identity, a new reality concerning who you are and what God has provided to you through Jesus Christ.

Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”* This is the new reality that we need to grab hold of and diligently learn what it means. Let me read that passage again, “If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation. Behold all things have become new”.

Beliefs Can Heal You, Beliefs Can Kill You

In this chapter we begin talking about the subject of imprinting and how it affects our lives. We discovered that imprinting happens at a heart level and that the Bible is very clear about this topic. Imprinting conditions us to past experiences to the point that we accept them as everyday normal behaviors. Everything about our life is the product of beliefs that are held within our heart. These beliefs create the boundaries that stop us from moving forward and pressing on in our lives. Coming to this awareness is an important step that you must take in order to truly have a fruitful and productive life.

When you stop and think about it, it is a lie, it’s really a mirage, to think that your problems are on the outside of yourself. As long as we

accept this lie, this mirage that the difficulties we face on a day to day basis are somehow on the outside of ourselves versus from the inside of our own self perceptions, we will continue to live as prisoners to the dictates of our environment, where we are reacting to circumstances and accommodating people and conditions. The real only boundaries and limitations are those that exist in your own heart.

Jesus talks about this when He was approached by two blind men. The Bible tells us that they were crying out, “Mercy son of David, mercy on us...” I love how The Message translation puts this story found in Matthew 9:27-29. It tells us, “*When Jesus got home, the blind men went in with him. Jesus said to them, ‘Do you really believe I can do this?’ ‘Why, yes, Master!’ He touched their eyes and said, ‘Become what you believe.’ It happened. They saw.*”

Did you get that? Jesus says the same thing to us, “Become what you believe.” instead of standing in the dark room of self-limiting beliefs, beliefs which up to this point you considered normal. Jesus is talking to us through the Holy Spirit and is telling us “Walk into the light of My provision for your life. Walk into the place of all that I have provided for you as an individual.”

You see, the boundary, the self-limiting belief that these two men had, was that it was their eyes that were the problem. No, it tells us here in this passage that the real issue was in their beliefs. Remember,, He asked them the question, “*do you really believe that I can do this?*” Their answer was a simple one, “*Yes master.*”

Do you believe that Jesus has already provided the answer to your miracle through the cross, death and resurrection? Do you believe? If

so, then embrace the provision for your life. In the last chapter I referred to Proverbs 4:23, which tells us to keep or guard our hearts because that is the place from which the issues of life flow. If you remember, the word “issue” actually means boundaries or borders. You see, what I believe this scripture is talking about here are the beliefs that we hold on to at a heart level, not necessarily at a conscious level. Again, what does the heart represent here? Remember that the heart represents your subconscious mind. It is out of this that your self concept and core beliefs come from, it is what you have held on to and believed to be true throughout your entire life.

We have all heard words of negativity spoken to us at one time or another. Words are a powerful thing, especially while we are children, because they can enter and become a part of our self-perceptions and influence us even when we are adults. Words that condemned, words of self-accusation, words that say, “nothing ever goes right with me”, “I’ll never win at anything”, “I’m just average”, “I’m stupid”, “I’ll never earn more than I am earning now,” even words about ancestry. For instance, one person I met believed that he had a bad temper because he was of German descent. How about words that say “My father was poor, his father was poor, so I guess that is just the way it is for me.” Have you ever heard any of those words? “My parents are genetically prone to diabetes and that is why I have diabetes”.

You see, the list of self-limiting beliefs go on and on. It seeps into the core of everything we believe and robs us from living the abundant life we have in Jesus Christ, where the Bible says we are seated with Him in heavenly places. I John 4:17 declares to us, “*Even as He is, so are we in this world*” This tells me that I am not limited by the voices

of my past, it tells me that I don't have to live as a victim any longer in my life. I can now have an influence on the direction of my future.

Now up until this point in your life, you have become what you have believed because of what others have told you, because of what you have done, those bad decisions in your life, or your beliefs may even be based upon your past accomplishments. The bottom line is, your heart is always at work 100% of the time to bring you to the destination that has been imprinted there. This can be a real eye opener for you and shows you how faith and fear are both at work in the beliefs in your life.

Have you ever wondered why you keep connecting with and reliving certain similar experiences in your life? You might have even convinced yourself that it was just "bad karma", the devil or some other outside force beyond your control. Take for instance a woman that has come out of an abusive relationship but who ends up in another abusive relationship. She wonders why it is that she keeps connecting with those kinds of men. Little does she realize that it is the beliefs within her own heart that are dictating the directions and choices she is making in her life.

You can take a woman who has experienced and suffered abuse throughout her life and put her in an environment full of good honest men. Add one or two who have a history of abusing women and watch what happens as this woman begins to relate with the various men. More often than not she will automatically gravitate and connect with one of the two men who are prone to violence. There is not likely to be a conscious choice involved in drawing her back to an abuser. Rather it

is caused by the barriers or strongholds her past experiences and expectations have built in her heart.

Inspired Action Steps: Now that you are beginning to see that the real issues are in the heart, how can you begin to see yourself differently? Stop right now and ask the Lord to reveal steps you can take immediately that will reveal your true identity as He sees you.



Chapter 7

The Servant and the Master

In the last chapter I introduced the idea that the heart (subconscious mind) has borders with which it seeks to maintain the status quo. This is what is often called a survival mechanism, and therefore it will resist change of any kind. It can be your closest friend and ally or your worst enemy. We were created with this amazing mind that is more powerful and accurate than any GPS communication device ever designed on the planet. This directional system is at work and on target 100% of the time. Like a thermostat on the wall set to seventy degrees, it knows exactly the moment to turn the furnace off and when to turn it back on again. Its split second precision is accurate enough to guide a missile into space and bring it back again. If you know how, it will take you wherever you want to go in life.

Imagine with me that you receive a sizable inheritance and so have a lot of money. You decide to build the dream home you have always wanted, a beautiful nine thousand square foot home with plenty of guest rooms, private pool, and tennis courts with all of the amenities.

You and your family move in over the weekend and as Monday rolls around you discover a problem. You are overwhelmed by the size and magnitude of your home and it dawns on you that it is going to take a lot of work, time and energy to keep things in order. You decide that you are going to need a housekeeper and so you begin to interview to find just the right person for the job.

You plan to be very deliberate about whom you are going to hire because you don't want to deal with a lot of turnover. You check the applicants' references and test their abilities, you go to great lengths to make sure you have just the right person. And when you find them, you're going to have them sign a lifetime contract which can't be violated. The housekeeper won't be able to quit and they can't be fired. After much time and effort you discover this delightful and capable person who appears to be absolutely perfect for the job, so you cut the deal.

By the next weekend this person has moved in, but by Monday morning you realize that you have a bigger problem. As it turns out, this person is not just a servant but is a dominating servant. What does this mean? It means that come Monday morning she comes to you all crisp in her uniform, calls you by your first name and says, "I want a clear understanding from this point on that I want you up and out of that bed by a quarter till six every morning. I make beds at six fifteen and I don't want body temperature in them! Do you understand?"

Then the housekeeper turns to your spouse, calls them by their first name and tells them, "I'm going to do the cooking, I'm going to serve the meals, and dinner will be served precisely at six. No one is to be

late. If they are late, they are just not going to sit down at my table. Oh, and I will have no one in my kitchen later digging around in the refrigerator for food, I am going to have everything set up for the next day and I don't want anything upset. If you come late, you are going to have to eat out, do you understand?"

The servant turns to your daughter and tells her, "Oh and there will be no pool parties, I am not going to put up with any noise and foolishness."

If this were a true story, just how reasonable do you think this situation is? What I am trying to demonstrate in this story of the master and the servant is the difference between the conscious mind and the subconscious. Without our realizing it, the subconscious mind has become what could be considered to be a dominating servant in our lives. The interesting thing about our subconscious is that it thinks it has our best interests in mind. It has established set patterns and experiences that it believes are for your own good; the problem is that these may not actually be for your own good, depending on where the information and beliefs came from and what they are. As crazy as it sounds, an addict might make a conscious decision to get clean, but their heart believes that making any sudden change, including good ones like getting clean, is bad. It sends signals to their brain and body that they are going to die if this step is taken.

Ever wake up one morning and when you went outside, you got that funny feeling that there was something wrong or different about that day? The next time that happens, stop and ask yourself, "What is different?" If you do that, you might discover that the wind is blowing

a little stronger that day, the weather or sky may be different than it normally is. Change of any kind triggers emotional responses in us all. The borders and footprints of our heart come from beliefs it has established, but the amazing thing is that our heart accepts these beliefs as our “normal.” The heart does not see this as good or bad, but simply strives to keep you locked to the treadmill with which it has become most comfortable.

What the heart sees as a threat (whether actually good or bad) are new experiences and beliefs that are different. For instance, if you are called upon to stand in front of a crowd to speak and you are not use to it, you will get sweaty palms and butterflies in your stomach because your heart has triggered your fear response.

One woman complained that her husband would always fall asleep the moment the preacher started his message. The amazing thing was that he would awake into full consciousness the moment the minister came to his closing statement. His heart was avoiding the discomfort of the preacher’s message by telling him he wanted to sleep.

Your heart is very adept at doing its job, which is to keep you safe. It will send panic attacks or will use a variety of things to keep you from change, and so from living a life of discovery and expansion.

The Inner Map of the Heart

The Bible in Eph 2:1, in the Amplified version, gives us an incredible description of these embedded beliefs and how they have become our master.

“In which at one time you walked [habitually]. You were following the course and fashion of this world [were under the sway of the tendency of this present age], following the prince of the power of the air. [You were obedient to and under the control of] the [demon] spirit that still constantly works in the sons of disobedience [the careless, the rebellious, and the unbelieving, who go against the purposes of God].

Among these we as well as you once lived and conducted ourselves in the passions of our flesh [our behavior governed by our corrupt and sensual nature], obeying the impulses of the flesh and the thoughts of the mind [our cravings dictated by our senses and our dark imaginings].”

I was thinking the other day about how miraculous life is and about the way God created us to be. Jesus told His disciples one day that unless you become as little children you’ll not enter into the kingdom of heaven. What a profound statement! Let me show you how this relates to the subject of imprinting in our lives. Have you ever noticed the way that babies and children have a natural kind of confidence about them, a natural energy that shines out from them? We were all babies at some point in our lives and it is at this point that I want you to think of yourself as a diamond, something that is perfectly authentic, totally open and shining. Babies are like that. They are authentic, wouldn’t you say? They are real and they have no problem asking for what they want and they will let you know right away when they need something.

Babies are not thinking about what they must do, they just get what they want. Another thing about babies is that they don’t realize that

they are anything other than completely fantastic. But, here is what begins to happen. As a baby grows it begins to learn. Now that is not a bad thing, that's a good thing. Babies are learning machines! That innocent openness to life is the part of childlikeness that the Lord wants us to emulate.

Let me talk with you about a map, and then I will tie this into what we will discuss later. Let's say you have a map, maybe a map of the city of Denver, where I live. The first thing I want to point out is that the map is not Denver; the city of Denver is far too big to fit onto any map. Think about it, Denver represents millions of people and it has far too many buildings, businesses and experiences than could never ever be contained on a map. A map of Denver is useful for navigating from one place to another in the city, but it is not Denver.

Now while you're reading this do me a favor and reach up and touch your nose. Go ahead, are you doing it? Now, stop and think about this single small action of reaching up and touching your nose, this simple process. There was a time in your life when you were not able to do this. There was a time in your life when you didn't even know what the word nose meant. There was a time when you didn't know that hand that you used to touch your nose was even your hand. You didn't know that there was a different function to each part of your body, but you learned it and you learned it very, very fast, all on your own. There were no books, no video courses, no seminars to attend; you were able to put this knowledge together without any help.

Now when you think about it, quite literally, you built a map of yourself, your body, your world and the important people in that world.

The first time you heard the word milk, you didn't even know what that was. It was just a sound that you heard that wasn't anything different from any other sound. But what then happened was that very quickly you began to associate that sound with warm, yummy liquid, with a picture inside your head. Now the amazing thing about this is that you also were able to do this with all the other words you ever heard. Every thought, belief, feeling and all your senses all came together to create associations. Your body was designed for a world of things and experiences, not for a world of words. But what you did was that you translated words into associated things that make sense to you at a very, very deep level.

Now, this process is taking place in us all on a continuous basis and is happening all automatically without any conscience effort on our part. The bottom line here is that you built a map of you and your self-image is that map of you! Now that map of you contains all the ideas that you have had about yourself and the world around you. Each of these ideas, if you can imagine with me, is like little shining light bulbs. Each of these ideas is also kind of like a cobweb of self-limiting beliefs. For example, someone might have an idea that it's not okay to get angry, or it's not ok to say no, or to even say yes, or it's alright to do this; it's not ok to do that. What you end up with in your life is like a layer of concepts, thoughts, ideas, self-limiting beliefs and associations that surround the real you, the shining brilliant diamond. Let's call this layer that surrounds you, for a lack of better words, dirt or compost.

Now the diamond is still there, but there is this layer of compost around it that constrains and restricts it from shining. What we then do is build an outside personality. This personality covers the outside of us

much like paint, creating a shiny surface. So, if I was to draw this in the imagination of your mind, the diamond represents who you really are, the shining, amazing you. The stuff around the diamond is who you fear you are, and the polish that is painted on the outside is who you pretend to be. We polish and show the personality because we don't want anyone to see the compost, because that is who we fear we really are.

Now the good news is that God sees you as perfect but He also understands how we were built and the map that you and I created throughout our entire lifetimes. He has created a way in which we can easily clear out all the stuff in our lives that keep us from shining that light out to the world. It is the light that represents that unique you, the light of your desires, the light of God's glory in you. The book of Galatians puts it this way: Paul the Apostle said, *"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live"*. In other words, Paul says here "I identify myself completely with Him, my ego is no longer central. The veneer or polish that is on the outside is no longer important."

The Message version of the Bible puts it this way, *"It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion and I am no longer driven to even impress God. Why? Because Christ lives in me, the life you see me living is not mine. But it is lived by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."* Paul here became so completely identified with Christ, that he embraced this new identity of who he was. He no longer identified himself with the old Saul. Those things were now passed away and behold all things were now new. He embraced Christ as his new identity, he discovered God as his source, and God met his personal

needs for approval, love and acceptance. No longer was he driven to meet those needs from an outside world that could never quench the thirst within. He was completely driven from within, Christ within! He was truly a free man.

This is what God desires for your life, He has come to set you completely free from a world that tries to control, from a world that constrains and tries to hold you down. You, my friend, are complete!

Are You Really The Sum Total of Your Beliefs?

Have you ever heard someone say that we are the sum total of our beliefs? I have, in fact I have probably used this term in the past. The question is, if we are the end result of our beliefs, even the wrong ones, then does that mean we are now victims held hostage with no way out? Can we change the inner beliefs of our hearts?

Beliefs are the conclusions we come to regarding the events that take place in our lives. We associate experiences in our lives with a meaning and come to conclusions about who we are and how we view our world as a consequence. As you saw in the last example, the maps within our lives are very extensive and almost overwhelming when you think about it. It is these messages that we come to accept as truth that go on to create our sense of normal.

For instance, we may have beliefs that say:

I'm a hard worker.

I'm a good parent.

I'm someone who thinks that I'm not very important.

I'm someone for whom life is difficult.

I'm someone who has a hard time making money.

I'm inadequate.

I'm powerless.

What I have to say isn't important.

If you take the time to examine each of these beliefs you will discover that they come from various experiences and events of our lives. Many of these events happened when we were small children or from later experiences that invoked strong emotions. You may have a belief that says "I'm not good enough" or "Mistakes and failures are bad". These beliefs can, without your realizing it, affect you later in life and stop you from having confidence, make you reluctant or seemingly unable to take risks, complete projects or even stay in a marriage.

Now, we can individually examine where each self-limiting beliefs comes from and challenge their validity in our lives, but is that the best way? The main thing I want to get to here is that these beliefs, no matter how negative or positive they may be, do not define who you are. You are not your beliefs! Remember, beliefs are conclusions we have come to about ourselves and that have become entrenched at a very deep level in our hearts. For example, someone might have gone through a traumatic divorce and now their heart might believe: "No one will ever want me again!"

I Am the Interpreter, Not the Sum Total of My Interpretations

Painful things may have taken place in your life but you can change how you believe what those experiences say about you. Change your conclusion and you remove the control, power and effect that it has had in your life. You are not your life, you are the creator of your life.

Changing our conclusion about who we are as individuals is one of the gifts that Jesus brought to us. The scripture in Ephesians 2:1 tells us that “*you were dead (slain) by [your] trespasses and sins...*” Notice the word “were”. That was the conclusion at one time. It goes on to say, “*In which at one time you walked [habitually]*”. You were following the course and fashion of this world.

God in His infinite mercy changed the conclusion about you. In fact He did this for the entire world! The moment you and I can accept this same conclusion at a heart level in our lives, sin, the past, false beliefs, and identity issues about who we are lose their control over us.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes,” (Romans 1:16)

The gospel is the good news of God’s declaration over your life of how He views you as an individual. Coming to the same conclusion sets us free in radical ways that the secular world cannot provide us. It is the truth of God received not just on an intellectual level, but the truth of God received on a heart level, that sets us free.

Hebrews 11:1 tells us that “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,*” Faith is not a mental agreement

with the facts received. Here in this passage faith is described as “substance”. What is substance? Substance is a tangible reality. It is the inner sense of a knowing something as truth.

Some people would lead you to believe that faith is blind, a forced “believeism” in which your mind overlooks the established conclusions of the heart and leaps into the unknown. In truth, faith is found when you have gathered enough evidence in your life that you become persuaded at the heart level. An alcoholic can be convinced that it would be best that he stop drinking. He can quote you all of the logical reasons why it would be a good idea. The problem is that he has come to some wrong conclusions about himself at a heart level. It is these wrong conclusions that will drag him back to his old patterns again and again even if he knows it is in his best interest to avoid alcohol. The sad thing is that he doesn’t understand why he keeps falling off the wagon, and often finally gives up altogether.

It is the same in your life. You can know all of the reasons why your life could be better and you can acknowledge the truth of God’s conclusion that He has provided “All things that pertain to life and godliness,” but the deeply embedded conclusions of your heart, without you realizing it, keep you from experiencing the promises.

Inspired Action Steps: What is God’s conclusion about the greatest struggle you are facing, how does He view it? Just before you go to sleep tonight, write out in longhand the truth of how God sees you. Instead of writing in the third person from God, write it in the first person. For instance, “I am perfectly accepted and loved in every area of my life”.

Write out at least three statements.



Chapter 8

The Power of Completeness

We have underestimated the gift that has been handed to us. We have surmised and limited God's expression and intent to us as only being the forgiveness of sin and a ticket to heaven. God gives us so much more than that! His provision has within it the power of unlimited supply for the meeting of every need that you have. Our greatest handicap is to not see what is ours right now in the present.

The declaration has been made "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."

Ownership is everything!

Stand in the parking lot of any city and try to convince a person who is getting into their car that it is really your car. Ask them to willingly give up the keys so you can drive off. When they say "No, this is my car!", continue to talk and explain to them that there is no way that this is their car but, it is yours. I am sure that no matter how hard you try or

how good your explanation may be, they are not going to willingly shrug their shoulders and hand you the keys. I doubt you could even wrestle the keys out of their hands. Why? They are not going to do it because ownership is everything! Ownership is in the present, it is not the hope or prayer for ownership at some future point, it is in the now! Once you've got it, you've got it and no one can take it away from you. You don't have to explain or convince others or yourself why it is yours, you just know it.

Now stand in front of a crowd of one hundred people and tell them that somebody there has the keys to your car. Explain to them how important it is that you get your keys so that you can leave. After everyone looks at you like you're crazy, continue to tell them that you know without any doubt in your mind that somebody there has the keys to your car. "Please bring them to the front" you instruct. Even if you jump up and down, throw a tantrum, fall on the ground and beg, I doubt anyone will willingly come up and hand you the keys to their own car. There could be a hundred people there, a thousand, or ten million, you are still not going to get anyone there to give up the keys to their own car.

What is the point of this? No one, and I mean no one, can hand you the keys to your own car! The fact is, only you can hand you the keys to your own car!

Did you get that? You can spend your entire life looking into the eyes of people around you, hoping that they will give you what it is you seek in life. It is not going to happen. You might be looking for approval, relevance or even that next promotion. Simply put, life works

on a set of principles that just won't bend or change for you no matter how badly you want them to.

This may seem like an odd statement to you but no one else has the power to get you where you want to go in life, only you have the power. Sitting around complaining and crying to yourself about how difficult life is and how no one recognizes you or your gifts won't get you what you need. None of that will work.

My wife and I graduated from Bible school and entered the ministry. We served in many positions throughout the years. We taught classes, became youth pastors, pastored churches, preached and ministered on television and radio, lived and ministered overseas, held crusades, opened a Bible school, and wrote and published tracts that have touched thousands upon thousands of people. I can say from experience that the level or measure of our success was determined by the level of a sense of ownership we had. If we felt small and powerless it directly affected the level or effect we had in ministry. We also discovered that ownership can't be taken away but it can be relinquished.

The footprints of our inner heart still carry within it the old patterns and mindsets of the past. Because of this we still lack the sense of ownership of that which is really ours.

We had a desire in our hearts to live and serve in a foreign country as missionaries. We lived in the Philippines off and on for three years but always returned to the states because our finances would run out. We finally decided to connect with a denomination which had a missions program in which they completely supported you. Hey, this

sounded like our ticket! The one requirement was that you had to pastor for at least three years with them before getting approved for their missions program. We pastored for four years and then applied to the Missions department for our next assignment. We were not approved because our children were the wrong ages! It seemed that their experience told them that children from age 10 to 14 don't do well on the mission field. we were very disappointed, to say the least.

You don't always understand why things don't happen the way you thought that they were supposed to happen, but if you give enough thought and prayer, I can guarantee you that the answers will come. In our case, it all boiled down to the question of who was our source and provision, and our trying to control the process. We wrongly believed that the key to our car was in the hands of someone else, which led us to false expectations. Is this an indictment against this denomination or others who had gone before us in their missions program? Absolutely not! We can not possibly look into the hearts of people and know what is there. God calls each of us differently to serve in different ways. Our measure of success comes from that inner knowing of who we are as God's child, not from seeming outward successes or failures.

The Hidden Hamster Wheels We Run On

Unfortunately, the majority of people spend their entire lives running on a "hidden hamster wheel" that keeps them chasing after dreams, goals & solutions that never arrive.

The hidden hamster wheel is a false belief – a belief that gets taught to us as children and gets reinforced throughout our entire lives. It tells

us that the issues and people around us are in control and at fault for our failures and disappointments, and if the circumstances would only change, we would change. We have come to believe that we are powerless victims, renters and squatters in a world that holds us hostage, instead of seeing ourselves as joint heirs and owners.

We do this within the context of our beliefs about God as well. We spend countless hours, weeks and years trying to get God to do something He has already done for us, instead of embracing it for our lives right now. Our prayer is usually that the circumstances and situations surrounding our lives would change rather than realizing that the condition of our hearts needs to change first.

A woman we met years ago came to us in a very depressed state of mind. She told us that she was a caretaker for her ailing Father, who was in need of continual care. She felt trapped by the situation and had no way out. Over a two year period, each time we got back with her, her depression only seemed to get worse. She would go over the details of her life and feel guilty about sometimes wishing her Father would die so that she could go on with her life. Our heart went out to her and we prayed for her many times. We hadn't heard from her in some time, but three years later we saw her again. I asked how her Father was and she explained that he had died a while back. The interesting thing about it was that she was still depressed, and she went on to moan to us about how difficult life was. The change in her circumstances hadn't solved her problem because the change that was needed was within herself.

There was a time in human history when people actually believed that the earth was flat. Obviously the consequence of such thinking

stifled exploration, it stopped people from exploring new lands because they feared falling off the edge. The hidden hamster wheels in our lives have a way of doing the same thing, they cause us to stop exploring for fear that we will fall off into the unknown darkness of uncertainty. Our fear of the unknown causes us to stop:

- Making a great living through doing the work we love
- Creating fulfilling relationships with those who matter to us
- Creating the lifestyle and experiences we truly desire
- Generating wealth, abundance and financial freedom
- Accomplishing our most inspiring goals and dreams
- Having good feelings, and experiences that match
- Living a life that's loaded with value, purpose and contribution

I Will Be Happy When...

How do you know if you are stuck on a hamster wheel? Just take a few moments and ask yourself if you have been deferring your sense of happiness through beliefs about having happiness, security, peace or success upon the attainment of something.

Belief #1 - I'll be happy and secure when I've got that car, a pay raise, the right relationship. If your answer is yes, you're on the wheel.

Belief #2 - I'll feel good about myself when I lose the weight, get out of debt, change a habit. If your answer is yes, you're on the wheel.

Belief #3 - I'll be OK when I get my spiritual life together, read the Bible, attend church more often etc. If your answer is yes, you're on the wheel.

Belief #4 - I thought I had gotten everything straight, only to discover I'm back in the same old place. If your answer is yes, you're on the wheel.

We have all heard the stories of people who won lottery tickets or found fame and then their lives fell apart. This is because they won where it concerned their outer-game but lost in the end because of their inner-game. We can win in life but still lose because of the inner beliefs of our heart do not allow us to maintain our successes.

An example of this would be the person who ends up getting out of one bad or abusive relationship only to go back into another one. They think they are winning because they get a new start, but don't know why they keep ending up with the same type of person. This of course goes back the GPS system of the heart that we talked about earlier.

While "*I'll be happy when...*" seems like common sense, it is really just an illusion that keeps people chasing after unattainable carrot sticks. There is nothing wrong with material possessions, just don't mortgage your peace of mind, happiness and security trying to get them. There is certainly nothing wrong with wanting good friends or a loving companion, but until you are happy and well balanced within yourself, your false heart beliefs will sabotage every relationship you find.

You might argue the point that pursuing happiness is a natural part of our wanting and desiring peace and security. People often say something like “But if I didn’t have that belief, I wouldn’t be motivated to do anything!” This is really part of the lie that we have accepted as truth. Most of our society believes that this is just the way it is, we meet the need driven drives of our lives by learning appropriate ways to get what it is we want in life. This causes us to live out of what I call “force,” where we are looking outside of ourselves to satisfy the emptiness we feel. This is of course is part of what we inherited from Adam and Eve’s decision to eat of the tree of self-sufficiency. You can read about it in Genesis 3:19 when God told Adam “by the sweat of your brow you will have food.” In other words, your life will be dictated to and you will have no other choice but to sustain yourself by those things that are outside you.

The truth is that yes, you were born with a natural sense of wonder and curiosity, a desire to explore the world around you and to create whatever you feel passionate about. But your living should come out of an awareness of your completeness and a sense of ownership of what God has given you.

You cannot get the peace, happiness and joy in life that you seek by living on the hidden hamster wheel. Those are things that come as a result of your relationship with Christ. They are a direct result of knowing who you are in Christ. Peace, happiness and joy describe who you are because of who He is.

These are things that we cannot acquire from outside of ourselves, because they have already been given to us. It is who we are!

Please understand clearly – there is nothing wrong with wanting the material success that you want. That's fine! But if you think you need it in order to be happy, the result can cause damage in two areas:

1. It separates you from your source of peace, wellbeing and security that is already right there inside of you through your union with Jesus.

2. It dulls and clouds your awareness of what you really want - your authentic core desires.

As you are continuing to discover, understanding your authentic desires is an essential ingredient when it comes to doing what you love and creating an amazing life with limitless possibilities.

Inspired Action Steps: Begin to make it a habit to envision what ownership means to you in specific areas of your life.

See yourself moving out of old patterns of beliefs and shifting into new incredible ways. Fully accept the fact that you are complete and that you lack nothing! God's purpose and plan for you is to live a fulfilled and happy life that is gratifying in every way.



Chapter 9

How to Move From Zero to One hundred in Sixty Seconds

Now when I am talking about ownership, I am not talking about the kind that demonstrates itself as pushy, controlling, demanding or manipulative. Ownership has less to do with how you act and respond to others and has more to do with your inner beliefs about who you are as a person. Behaviors that are pushy, controlling and manipulative are demonstrated by people who still believe that others around them have the keys to their car.

What is the opposite of someone who feels complete? Well, the opposite would be incompleteness. Descriptive words that come to mind would be a sense of lack, to be defective, deficient, and insufficient, or feelings of imperfection.

A feeling of weakness or powerlessness puts us on an endless journey to get, keep and maintain whatever our own personal definition of "completeness" may be. In fact from early childhood we learn out of

necessity all sorts of ways to "get complete". We reach outside of ourselves in order to find, control or manipulate life to meet our perceived needs and feel and maintain our feeling of "completeness".

This is what I believe God was addressing when He said to Adam and Eve in the garden, after they had made the decision to eat from the tree of self-sufficiency, "*In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread*" (Genesis 3:19). In Scott's modern paraphrase it would read "By continuous use of force, self effort and exertion you will seek to sustain yourself all the days of your life." By reading it this way, it really expands our understanding that the hunger and thirst within each of us is not limited to natural food or water but the desire to be complete once again. In the New Testament Paul the Apostle tells us that the entire "*creation was subjected to futility*" (Romans 8:20).

This speaks of exertion which leads to nowhere.

It is like the story in Greek mythology of Sisyphus, who was compelled to roll a huge rock up a steep hill, but before he could reach the top of the hill, the rock would always roll back down again, forcing him to begin again, eternally.

A Thirst That Cannot be Quenched

In my book "Breaking the Cycle of Defeat" I talk about the need driven drives of our lives and how we spend our entire lives learning to meet them in very exotic ways. Reaching for completeness in our own strength is what each of us has learned to do. The ability to abandon the old water wells of the past and learn a new and different way is what Jesus came to give us.

One of the most profound stories in the gospels was when Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria about the power of thirst. Not only did He understand the need driven drives of this woman but He understood that all mankind was also driven from within with an unquenchable thirst that could not be satisfied. For thousands of years humanity has stumbled through the desert sands of this Earth looking to satisfy the thing that they craved for from within. The same inner yearnings that the woman at the well had asked herself are the same questions that have brought you to this book.

Who am I?
Why am I here?
Where am I going?
How do I get there?

Jesus saw what no other man could see, He looked intently into the eyes of this woman and could see her thirst. He understood and knew the real reason why she went from one man's bed to another. He knew the futility of giving her a lesson in morality and law. He recognized the true cry of her heart.

Jesus told her *“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”* (John 4:13-14)

What was Jesus saying to this woman? He was communicating to her, in terms she could understand, that the thirst for relevance, significance and completeness that she had could not be satisfied by her current attempts of living by force. Reaching outside ourselves for

significance, relevance, identity and purpose is like trying to wrestle the keys out of the hands of those who have no power to give them. It is drinking from a bottle of water that only quenches your thirst temporarily.

“...and you are complete in Him!”

Jesus calls us as believers to drink the water of His perfect provision for our lives. The Bible tells us that He has given us all things that pertain to life and Godliness, therefore you lack nothing!

What does it mean to “rest” in His provision? It means to accept God’s declaration of who you are in Him. It means the emptying of yourself of all the old notions and thought patterns to which you previously were accustomed. It is taking the keys that God has placed in our hands and integrating them into your heart to the point that ownership occurs. Someone once said that in the court of law possession is 9/10^{ths} of the law.

Hebrews 11:1 describes faith as being the substance of the things hoped for. The word here for substance means “title deed” or “sense of ownership.” Possessing our possessions is not asking God to give us more of what we already have. It is not a “fake it `til you make it, pull yourself up by the bootstraps” mentality. It is gathering enough evidence until your heart has been persuaded that it is indeed yours.

Living out of incompleteness means that you feel incompleteness and therefore as a result you end up living out of a place called “force.” You have spent years gathering evidence based on this belief, therefore your heart leads you to reach outside yourself for things you believe

will complete you. Living by force means that you are living from the outside in rather than from the inside out.

Living out of completeness means that you have an awareness that you lack nothing. You are now gathering evidence that supports this belief in such a way that it persuades your heart to this fact. You have an inner sense of “knowing” which creates a quiet confidence in all that you do and that does not demand attention. You are self-sustaining. In other words, the world around you can be deteriorating and falling apart but you are not moved. Your heart leads you in such a way that you are effortlessly attracting and connecting with paths of righteousness (as it should be).

Last year I stood on a hillside with my wife, just outside of Denver. As we were pondering God’s goodness, the words out of Psalms 24:1 came to my mind. *“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof”*. As I spoke these words out I was reminded that God through His love to us had given us all things and that Jesus himself has given us the keys and authority of heaven itself to walk it out. I heard the echo of my own heart *“The Earth is mine and the fullness thereof.”* Claiming ownership to this magnitude may at first sound sacrilegious to a heart that is not ready to hear it. But the fact remains that this Earth and all that is in it is a gift that has been handed to each of us.

See yourself positioned and seated with Christ Jesus in heavenly places.

I John 4:17 declares *“Even as He is, so are we in this world...”*

Ephesians 2:6 tells us that He has *“raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”*

Flashlight of the Subconscious Mind

When my children were very young and I would tuck them into bed at night I would quote a statement that I once read from author Denis Waitley. As I was about to flip the lights off, as the lights were about to grow dim, I would say, “Now, when I turn these lights off the lights of the entire world will go off at the same time. And when you close your eyes the eyes of everyone in the entire world will close with you.”

Now let me explain, the reason I would tell them this is that I was trying to get across the importance of their perceptions and how they viewed their world. It was how they viewed the world that was important, not how the world viewed them or even how the world they lived in viewed others.

Listen to the importance of this statement. A person “is” what they think and imagine, a person “acts” what they think and imagine and they “see” what they think and imagine. Now the big question you are going to have to ask and answer is, “What color is my world?”, because when it really gets down to it, our perceptions affect everything in our lives.

Take for example three people standing on a street corner. One is a marketing entrepreneur, the other is a real estate person who sells property, and the third person is an auto salesman who sells automobiles. The question that I want to ask you is, do you think each

of these three people see the same thing while standing on that street corner?

Well, the answer is obviously “no,” they all perceive their world differently. What the marketing person sees as he is standing there is the billboard across the street, and he is thinking to himself, “I wonder how much it would cost to advertise there.”

The real estate person sees something completely different. She doesn’t even see the billboard. She sees the vacant lot where the billboard stands, notices a “For Sale” sign and thinks to herself, “Hmmm, I wonder what the asking price is and I wonder if this investor I know would be interested in that property?”

On the other hand, the auto salesman has still another viewpoint. He doesn’t see the billboard or even the vacant lot; he is watching the cars go up and down the street. He is thinking, “Hey, there are more foreign cars than American build cars going up and down this street.” He thinks to himself about how many foreign cars he has on his car lot.”

If you were to stand there and somehow be able to look into the thought process of these three people on that street corner, you could think that they were standing one hundred miles apart on different street corners. What each of them saw there on that corner was actually there, but the real fact was that there was a whole lot there of which they weren’t even aware, because of their individual frames of reference.

Now let me give you another example to help you understand how powerful our perceptions are. Let's say that on another day, I am standing on that same street corner with someone else and I have a self-perception that I am a failure. The other man I am standing with thinks of himself differently, he has a sense of ownership about his life and sees himself as a success. As we are standing there together, we each see the billboard, the vacant lot across the street and the cars going back and forth on the street.

Now, the first thing I notice about that billboard is the advertisement. I think to myself "Wow, it sure seems like everyone is trying to sell you something! But what can you expect? The world is full of people trying to take advantage of you." You see, that is my perception. What does the man who thinks of himself as a success notice about that sign? He notices the thing that is being advertised, and thinks to himself how it would save him time and trouble and look nice in his home.

What I notice about the vacant lot is that there is no building on it. Which really says to me that the real estate market is overbuilt in this area and that is probably why the lot won't sell? I conclude that it is just another sign of an economy that is slowing down. See how I perceive things? Now the person that I am with who thinks of himself as a success is not thinking anything similar. He is thinking about opportunity. "Hey, there is no place to get gas around here, this would be a great place to put a station or mini-mart."

What I notice about the cars driving up and down the street is that everyone is driving new cars and I am not. I think to myself, "How

greedy and wasteful everyone is, I would rather drive an old car, it shows that I have values.” Now the person who thinks of himself as successful notices the BMW that just drove by and imagines himself driving that beauty.

I hope you are beginning to see the way that your perceptions impact every area of your life. This relates back to what we were earlier talking about concerning the imprinting in our hearts. Everyone around you sees, thinks and acts from their own perceptions. It is as if we all live in the same house but are looking out of different windows.

Put this into the context of your own family and home. If you're married, you perceive different things than your spouse, who certainly has different perceptions. How about your children, do you have a daughter like I do? She has different perceptions that cause her to see her world completely differently, that you probably are not even aware of. Your son is doing the same thing. This goes for all of your children! Same house, different windows, we are all seeing a different world, aren't we?

Does the Bible say anything about this? I'm glad you asked. Proverbs 23:7 tells us, *“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he”*. So what does that tell us? It tells us that we had better watch what is in our hearts, right?

Matthew 6:22, 23 tells us that the lamp of the body is actually the eye, it is our perception in life. In the Amplified version of the Bible, I like how it puts it: *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The eye (your perception) is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is*

sound, your entire body will be full of light.” In other words, it is talking about how you understand things. “But if your eye is unsound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the very light in you [your conscience] is darkened, how dense is that darkness!” See how your perceptions guide your life and takes you places you may not want to go? It continues to say here in this passage that if the very light in you (your conscience) is darkened, how dense is that darkness! This was Jesus telling us this. Same house, different windows.

Inspired Action Steps: How you view things comes from your heart. Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 20:21) Your treasure is the things you value in life and represents your identity. If you have the false belief that “things” will give you happiness (which they can’t) you will run in circles your entire life. It will cloud your ability to see through to your authentic desires.

Begin to expand your thinking from God’s point of view. See God in the flesh living large in your heart and life. Expand your thinking by reading 2 Peter 1:2-4 and thinking about what this means for your life in practical ways.



Chapter 10

Change your perceptions and you will change your world

What does this mean for you? It means that every answer to every problem that you see on Earth has already come. It doesn't matter how dark it seems outside, the light switch is only a few steps away. Now most people have chosen to remain in the dark, they stand around in groups and clusters of people and like to talk about how dark it is. Once in a while some person makes a suggestion that, "Hey, maybe we should go over and flip the switch on?" And for the most part these kinds of suggestions are ignored, probably because people are afraid that their eyes might hurt if too much light comes into the room all at one time.

The truth of the matter is that there remains a darkness of some sort in all of us. Mostly it has to do with those things we complain about in life. But make no mistake, light is light and truth is truth and if you look for it, there certainly is an abundance of it. I mean, that is what Jesus told us right?

Here He is the light of the Earth, the light of the world, and when He enters, He discovers a world full of people stumbling over themselves in darkness. He stood on a hill one day and He said, “I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” That statement stunned a few people to say the least.

The religious people argued that the darkness that they had become accustomed to was good enough and that they enjoyed stumbling around. Paul the Apostle later said that in the gospel righteousness from God is revealed. It sounds to me like someone was flipping light switches on, a light switch of truth, a light switch of God’s kingdom which says “All things are ours in and through Jesus Christ.” Jesus told His disciples to pray after this manner. “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.” We know now that Jesus brought righteousness from heaven to Earth and made it available to all mankind. I see it like this, a new reality of God’s righteousness having been made available and manifested to each and every one of us.

The light switch is there for all of us. I went into a church and found out that they liked to use dimmer switches, you know the kind that allows you to control how much light you let into the room. I decided to go over and turn the switch all the way up so the people could see a little better. That didn’t work out so well, it got a bunch of people upset at me. It sounds a bit crazy but I guess we all make the choice about the level of light we want in the room. I mean, we Christians stand around and sing songs about it, we read scripture and talk about this light, but we often resist it when it shows up at our doorstep. We resist truth when it is prejudicial against previously held mindsets and beliefs.

CHANGE YOUR PERCEPTIONS AND CHANGE THE WORLD

God told Job in Job 40:8 “*Would you condemn me to justify yourself?*” This really tells me that our need to be right where it concerns what we are experiencing in life can keep us from discovering God’s answer. In other words, it is natural for us to condemn and blame things outside of ourselves (even God) then to accept the possibility that the problem is in what we believe. It is these things that we have become accustomed to and have accepted as normal.

The ability to create a new normal is what Jesus came to bring us. By the way, deciding on a new normal doesn’t happen by accident. It requires deliberately choosing to embrace a new reality of God’s righteousness and what it means for you on a practical level.

We see what we want to see and we hear only what we want to hear. Years ago I read several books which explained about the part of your brain that is known as the Reticular Activating System - or RAS. Your RAS plays a vital part in your ability to achieve goals.

What is this RAS?

Imagine that you're walking through a busy and loud airport passenger terminal. Think of all the noise - hundreds of people talking, music, announcements, and luggage carriers. How much of this noise is brought to your attention? Not a lot. True, you can hear a general background noise, but not many of us bother to listen to each individual sound.

But then a new announcement comes over the public address system - saying your name or maybe your flight. Suddenly your attention is

full on. Your RAS is the automatic mechanism inside your heart that brings relevant information to your attention.

This just one part of the powerful GPS system you have on the inside of you. It is fully aware, fully awake at all times and will zero in on the things you have determined in your heart as important. Once you have aligned your heart in the directions you really want to go, it will go to work for you on autopilot.

When we get our heart fixed on the truth of God's Word concerning our identity, His complete love and provision for our lives, it sets us free in so many ways. We can turn our focus from the meeting of our own needs to living out of our sense of completeness in a world that hungers for something that is real. No longer are we living to sustain ourselves from the world around us, instead we become fully convinced that we have an unending supply of God's goodness and as a result we begin to live out our lives in powerful dramatic ways.

This is where the Holy Spirit works on the inner GPS system of our hearts. He is at all times leading and guiding us into the truth of what is ours in the finished work of Jesus. As our hearts become persuaded, we learn to trust in the impulses and promptings that we feel and to know that the Holy Spirit is at all times at work within us.

“Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is

good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].” (Romans 12:2 AMP)

“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.”

(Proverbs 3:5-6)

Grace and Truth

I like to think of the word “grace” as the full capacity to live “the as it should be” of God out on Earth in unique and powerful ways. Grace is much more than the typical definitions we have given it. It is much more than “God’s unmerited favor”, it is His extreme unmerited favor that is meant to touch every area of our lives. Jesus demonstrated to us what Grace looked like when He turned the water into wine, healed the blind and raised the dead. It was witnessed by the multitudes who were fed by five fish and four loaves, and seen transcending the laws of nature as He walked on water.

The Bible tells us that Jesus didn’t just come to us with Grace alone but also with truth. When we read that Jesus was also “Full of truth;” it speaks of the full force of wisdom that understands the enabling power of the kingdom and showed Him how to apply it. Jesus not only was full of grace but He also contained the knowledge and wisdom of heaven to operate in that grace. *“One who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)*

What does that mean for us?

Jesus operated from a position of authority and strength because He was complete in every way possible. He did not come into the world trying to discover His identity, relevance or purpose, He knew who He was when He entered it, and He had an owner's mentality. Only an owner could say, "*No man takes it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*" (John 10:18).

Inspired Action Steps: What inspired you in this chapter? Think about ways you can apply this today. If need be write it out so you can be reminded.



Chapter 11

The Three ‘Whats’ of Ephesians One

Paul wrote a letter to the church in Ephesus and told them that He prayed continually for them that their eyes would be opened to the spirit of wisdom and revelation provided to them in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. I think that it is important that we pay close attention to exactly what it was he was praying for regarding their need for understanding and enlightenment, and how it may apply to God’s desire for our own understanding to be made clearer in our own lives.

Paul the Apostle wrote directly out of divine inspiration. It was the Holy Spirit himself who voiced these words through Paul as Paul wrote these words. As you read you will discover that he prayed specifically for three areas in the life of believers.

1. What is the hope of your calling
2. What the riches of the glory of His inheritance in us
3. What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making

mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know *what is the hope of His calling*, and *what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*, And *what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe*, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.” (Emphasis mine)

Ephesians 1:15-20

You Have Been Called To the Hope of His Calling

The hope of His calling refers to your divine destiny as intended by God; it is His eternal purpose for your life. It starts out with a personal revelation of who you are in Christ and leads to a life of trust in His ability to live life through your every action, thought and deed. It represents who God made you to be in Christ.

The Message Bible puts it in simple terminology:

But I do more than thank, I ask - ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory - to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, *so that you can see exactly what it is that He is calling you to do*. (Emphasis mine)

When God reaches out to us in love, His first intention is not just forgiveness of sin but also to restore us as His children back to His first

intention for us. It is interesting to note that just a few verses after this Paul urged believers to “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”

Walking worthy of the call isn't what we typically call “acts of religious duty,” you know, the kind that says that in order to serve God you must fit a certain stereotype. Typical religious roles that I grew up with meant that you stood on corners and witnessed to people, went door to door, wore a tee shirt that said, “God Loves You”. I was told that if you were a musician you could only play and sing inside the four walls of a church, anything else would be the same as prostituting your gift. I argued the point with my parents that if this was so then carpenters could only build steeples and crosses. Artists had to paint only manger scenes and people with halos over their heads.

No, what I believe Paul is talking about is the explosive power of God that shines through each of our lives in unique and profound ways. It is grabbing onto life with both hands and living your passion fully and completely in a world that is desperate for what is on the inside of you.

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil.3:14)

The Riches of The Glory of God's Inheritance is In You

The riches of the glory of His inheritance are those things that you and I have been freely given. The riches include everything that has been redeemed in your life, body, soul and spirit. The word inheritance

denotes that it is something that was secured to you based upon a death. This means your life, personality, gifts and talents have become the full benefactor of the death of Jesus. Your natural gifts and talents are not to be excluded from bringing glory to God but are very much a part of how you are to express His glory in the Earth.

When you think about this scripture it is a truly amazing expression; not only do you obtain an inheritance in God, but God also secures an inheritance in you as well. In other scriptures we are declared not only as His "portion" and His "special treasure," but also His "inheritance."

The Exceeding Greatness of His Power Has Been Given To You

We are told in the first few verses of Ephesians chapter one what the exceeding greatness of His power includes. As you read through it, you will find the following descriptive words.

You have every spiritual blessing,
You have been chosen,
You are predestined,
You are accepted,
You are redeemed,
He has abounded toward you in all wisdom,
You have received the full knowledge of the mystery of His will.

In Jesus, it tells us that we have divine enablement, heaven's promise for our success. This is one of my favorite parts of the Bible because it tells me that not only is failure not an option in my life but success is inevitable as I allow His life to be expressed through me.

The Filing Cabinet of Heaven

Imagine with me that somehow you are able to step through heaven's gates and are given the opportunity to take a personal tour with me. As we walk and search through its streets, not only are you dazzled by its beauty but your ears are filled with harmonious angelic music coming from all directions. As we stroll, we eventually come upon the very throne room of God, and next to it we find a massively huge building. Curiosity waits to be answered and so we step inside to see what its contents may be.

An incredible sight fills your eyes as you discover that it is a multi-tier storage facility, filled with millions and millions of file cabinets. Nothing comparing to its size or magnitude could ever be found on Earth. As we begin to walk its aisles, somehow, you are instantly aware of what these file cabinets represent. They hold the names and information of every individual ever born on planet Earth. "Why, it's the complete history of all mankind" you exclaim. Your immediate thought of course is to find your file so that you could take a look inside.

Now, let me ask you, if you were to discover such a structure filled with file cabinets and you did find a cabinet with your name, what do you think its contents would be?

To be honest, I use to think that my file would contain all of the devious and bad things I had done in my life. It would tell about the time I stole a pack of cigarettes in 6th grade and smoked them next to the elementary school. It would show the mischievous deed when my

brother and I poured bubble bath soap into the giant water fountain in the middle of the mall, causing bubbles to pour out all over the floor and bringing the fire department out in full force with mops and buckets in hand.

I even believed that someday I would stand before the judgment seat of God and he would roll out a projector out of the back room and have a grand showing of all my evil and shameful deeds. Well, I have good news for you! I believe that yes, there is a file cabinet of sorts in heaven and yes, it does have your name on it. But instead of listing your present circumstances and poor decisions it shows something quite different.

Imagine walking up to a file cabinet and opening it up and finding your name. You see three files and so you reach for the first one and open it up. Inside you discover a book containing the blueprint of your life, written before you were ever born! As you open its pages, its contents came alive with pictures and living sound. Recorded inside is every step from the moment you were conceived to the time you lay your Earthly body to rest. Written are your most magnificent moments and possibilities. Each turn of the page reads almost like fiction because, while some of its contents are familiar, there are other stories and accomplishments that have not been realized as of yet.

The reasons, you conclude, are that the descriptions go beyond the present. Its words speak of what could be, what should be and what can be. You wonder to yourself, I wonder when I die how much of this book will I have lived and how many pages will be turned blank and empty?

Oh, but look, there is another file. What strange and mysterious words are written here, words of hope, words of faith and words of love! This second file contains all that God has bestowed upon you at birth, a portfolio of sorts, telling of life's most precious gifts. Every talent, every skill set, along with every ability will have been listed there. This file would be a prospectus of sorts, listing out each and every talent and gift in amazing detail and grace.

What is most amazing about this second file is that it is in direct proportion to the achievements and accomplishments listed in the first file. It lists beside each skill, talent and ability a notation referencing the matching accomplishment that is contained in the first file. It is almost as if to say that every possibility that you were to live out in this life had within it the necessary equipment to accomplish the intended result.

In addition to this divine arrangement of abilities and possible achievements, you discover a third file. In it you find a listing of every spiritual deposit made for you on your behalf, to ensure your complete success in life. The word Salvation appears at the top, and then listed are the words, healed, delivered, blessed, prospered, protected, made whole, set apart. Listed under each word are complete and full descriptions of what they personally mean for your life. As you read, your eyes scroll down to the bottom of the last page. Written by hand in big bold red letters it says... "Nothing Shall Keep Us Separated!"

And underneath those words were written "This is my personal promise of divine connection to you for all eternity." and it is signed, Your friend, Jesus Christ!

His Promise, Your Gift!

What you just read was of course an allegorical picture of what is available to you. Taking a walk through heaven's gate can help give us a better perspective of the magnificent gift of life which has been given to each of us. It is a personal journey into the heart and mind of God as He shows you His picture of you. Can you give yourself permission to travel with me into limitless possibilities for your life? Would you take just a few minutes to see that God created you with greatness in mind? Oh, if you could just catch a glimpse of the vision of God for your life you would leap and take joy with me.

You my friend are not alone, you were meant for divine connection and divine release. A divine covenant has been written between the Father and Son with you in mind, containing heavens signature promising and guaranteeing spiritual enablement to accomplish and live out your destiny.

You, my friend, are closer then you think!

See the End From Where You Stand

God sees your life as completed and finished, isn't that amazing! He does not see you where you are at today! The omniscience of God sees you complete in Him, in fact the Bible says that you have been made "*accepted in the Beloved*" Eph. 1:6. That is a powerful statement that speaks volumes about your true identity. You see, while you may be dealing with issues in your own life and struggling with thoughts that try to remind you about how far short you fall, God's declaration of you is completely different. Everything around you will try to remind you of your past and your failures. Self-accusation is the one great

enemy that must be utterly destroyed in your life. You must learn to embrace the truth of your identity in Jesus by looking at what He accomplished for you. As we do this, we begin to see through the eyes of our heavenly Father who sees the end from the beginning.

Isaiah 46:10 tells us that God knows the end from the beginning.

This speaks to us on so many levels. Seeing the end from the beginning points to the completed work of Jesus concerning our identity. Seeing the end from the beginning also points to how we should see everything in our lives. How do you see yourself? Do you look at what you have or have not accomplished up to this time in your life? Or are you looking ahead to the future—to the END OF YOUR RACE?

Each of us needs to look ahead, we need to anticipate what lies ahead and go for that, we cannot allow ourselves to be limited by what we did yesterday.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope...”

(Jeremiah 29:11)

Seeing the end is how Jesus did it! Scripture tells us that Jesus endured the cross “for the joy that was set before Him!” He saw something that was not apparent to anyone else around Him. These words speak of His ability to envision the end results before they ever took place.

Psalm 139:16 says that all the days ordained for me were written in your book “*before*” one of them came to be. God saw the finished work in you before you were even born. Imagine that!

Seeing the end takes place when you are able to identify and get in touch with the authentic desires of your heart. What is an authentic desire? It is the opposite of the hamster wheel of beliefs that tells you, “I’ll be happy when...” Authentic desires come from an authentic identity. The authentic identity fully realizes God as the source of all life and does not look elsewhere for relevance and purpose.

An authentic desire simply means that you are living out of that place that Jesus spoke of when talking to the woman at the well.

Don’t Make the Process Your Source

I don’t know anyone who hasn’t fallen for this one. Here is what happens. We hear God’s direction for our lives and as a result we lose sight of the one who gave us the desires of our life as our true source and set out on our own to accomplish our purpose. Abraham took Hagar, Sarah’s handmaiden, and ended up giving birth to Ishmael. How about when Moses killed the Egyptian who was oppressing one of his Jewish brethren? He was trying to fulfill God’s will concerning the Jews’ return to the land of promise.

When we try to make the process our source, in the end we create toxic goals in our life that take us off course from God’s direction and will for our lives. We also open ourselves up to the emotional false expectations of life when things don’t work out. In the end we blame

God for not fulfilling His word in our lives. We complain, “Where are you God, don’t you see how I stepped out in faith?”

Toxic Goals Versus Authentic Desires

Be aware that some goals can be toxic and can stop you from connecting to your authentic desires. How do you know if your goals are toxic?

Here are some examples of toxic goals:

1. A goal that you pursue because you think you should
2. A goal that you pursue because you have decided that it will be a source of your happiness
3. A goal that you settle for because you think it's unrealistic to go for what you really want
4. A goal you want to achieve so God or other people will approve of or validate you

Each of us has desires within us that can sometimes become hidden by the other mixed messages we are receiving. It could be toxic goals that keep us from moving in the directions that will lead us into experiencing the happiness we deserve. The longer you postpone the decisions that are authentic to your true desires, the more hidden they become to us. Isn't it about time you stopped deferring your happiness?

The good news is that God never gives up! Even when our ears are closed to the truth about how to live an incredibly fulfilled life, it does not stop the Holy Spirit from speaking. He is always speaking and nudging us in ways of which we may not even be aware.

My prayer for you is that your ears are fully open, that you have a heart that is open to the magnificent truth of the Father's love for you...that you will be alert to every nudge, thought and idea that comes your way that you will take immediate action no matter how small it may seem to be.

Years ago, God gave me the following seven lessons about the power of desire in your life. God had shown some things I needed to do in order to be about what He wanted to do in my life, but I had argued that I did not have education or talent to do them, and this is how He answered me.

- I will pass over the heads of ten men with expertise and knowledge to reach one man who has DESIRE
- I will go only as far as your DESIRES will go
- DESIRE is one of the greatest forces held in the human container
- DESIRE will make a champion out of a failure
- DESIRE will make or break a man
- DESIRE with the force of faith behind it, will push a man to total success
- DESIRE will swallow up mountains, it will cross ravines.

If your DESIRE is big enough, and by this, I mean clear and focused, when confronted by circumstances and problems it will swallow up the problem and continue on to total success.

Inspired Action Steps: What is written in your file? What is stirring in you and wanting to get out? Choose to live your dreams and take action now no matter how small your effort may seem to be.

If holding onto toxic goals keep you from experiencing true happiness, then where should good goals come from?



Chapter 12

Getting From Here to There

You were created after God's image and likeness. This means that God placed within us the ability to live life without limits, a life that is purposeful and intentional. You are not a happenstance, God considers you special and fully loves you unconditionally. The only limits in life are the beliefs we accept as truth. These become the idols in our minds to which we are in essence succumbing and becoming servants. I encourage you to take a step of faith into the arms of a loving God who only wants the best for your life.

What are some steps we can take to move toward living and experiencing this incredible life? Well, one thing for sure, we have to know what it is we really want and who we really are. God tells us that He will give us the desire of our heart, which really has a two edged meaning.

1. We each have authentic desires within us.
2. We are then given the ability and capacity to live out those desires in unique ways.

I don't think that the desires He gives us are as restrictive as some people would have you to believe. God doesn't hand us an orange set of prison clothes with a number on the front to help identify us. The authentic desires of your heart are not restrictive in any sense of the word, they are expansive.

So what do we need to know in order to live this life?

Know Who You Really Are and What You Really Want

I can tell you right now that many of the definitions about ourselves that we now hold in our heads are completely false. Most people carry around a variety of thoughts, ideas and concepts regarding what they believe will give them happiness in life. But when they get what they desire they soon discover that it is an empty shell. I spoke once on the topic of living your passion, and was approached afterwards by a guy by the name of Don. He told me in no uncertain terms that I was all wrong, and how delusional going after your passion really is. He went on to say that he had followed his passion and ended up selling everything and moving to Montana to live in a cabin and fish to his heart's content. It hadn't taken but two weeks before he discovered that he was bored out of his mind.

This individual thought he knew what he wanted, but when he got there he discovered otherwise. This section will introduce you to a process that will keep you from moving off of the path and assist you in discovering how you can REALLY know what you want and who you REALLY are. The sooner you figure that out the better off you are.

Most people never really stop to think through and answer some of the motivations and drives they have. For instance, they may say that the reason they are doing what they do is to make more money, or connect with others, or to travel the world. The next question gives us clues to some of the reasons we want these things in our life. What do we believe having these things will give us that we don't have now?

Why do you want that income?

Why do you want to network with others?

Why do you want to contribute to others?

WARNING: Your Heart Will Lie to You.

One reason our initial answers may not be correct is because they are surface answers that are provided to us by our subconscious minds. They are not necessarily to be discarded, but they are not the absolute truth. If your inner heart has been playing the role of “master” instead of “servant,” then you can be assured that the first answers that you hear are not necessarily the truth. Our heart provides us answers that are familiar paths, nice little sound bytes that keep us from making real choices about the directions of our lives. The truth is, we all want to create and perpetuate experience. Our experience is those things we believe we will get as a result of having money, friends, travel, or like Don, a cabin in Montana.

Here is a hint for you, desire is not material. You really don't want the BMW you've been dreaming about. What you really want is the illusion you believe that the BMW will give you.

There is nothing wrong with driving the car of your choice. The issue is that if your life pursuit for happiness is in the material, you will be sorely disappointed when you finally arrive at your destination to discover that it doesn't match the experience you have been playing in your head the whole time. What we all really want is the new life we believe that the stuff will give us. - Example: When a family buys a new home they are not buying the bricks and mortar. They want the life that they believe the new home will provide them.

Everything that is sold is based in this principle. Some part of our brain is saying... will this move me toward or away from what I believe will answer what is in my heart? The key is in making sure that what you are trusting in is indeed going to move you toward your authentic desire. Stories abound of those who spent their entire lives chasing and never apprehending the prize. Paul the Apostle put it this way.

“And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:25-27)

Getting clear about what it is you really want and who you really are has incredible benefits. This is what I call living authentically. When you understand on a conscious level what it is you really want you then persuade your heart with the same truth. This is when you become the master and your heart becomes the servant. Instead of becoming the result of the condition, you begin to create the condition and begin to

truly live a life of passion and fire. The results that Jesus had in His life mission came directly from His being authentic to Himself. The gospel of Luke 2:52 tells us that as a young man Jesus grew and *“increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”* Wisdom is knowledge of how to walk out and apply the righteousness (as it should be) of God in the world around you. Jesus above all understood the futility of exercising force to bring about the righteousness (as it should be of God) in the Earth.

Remember we noted in an earlier chapter that Jesus Himself told those around Him that up until the time of His death, burial and resurrection men had been using force to enter the kingdom, or as the literal wording here puts it, “the realm of the kingdom of heaven”.

Jesus understood how to move effortlessly throughout His life. He effortlessly connected with a heart that was centered and as a result flowed with the unforced rhythms of Grace.

When you communicate from this core place as Jesus did, you are centered, stable and focused. This total clarity magnetically attracts "matches" and causes you to exponentially be more persuasive. Jesus called the twelve from obscure places of life and as the Bible records, “They immediately left their nets and followed Him.”

Effortless Transformation

Effortless transformation happens when you understand your identity (who you are). As you come into the knowledge of just who you are, you begin to see yourself differently at a heart level. You begin

to see that nothing is impossible and you begin to sense the unforced rhythms of grace operating in every area of your life. You become clear about your core desire and begin to live it out authentically.

“For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13)

Magnetically, because your heart is fixed upon the truth that you are complete in Him, you begin to move in the right directions, make the right decisions, attract and find favor with people around you who respond to you on a heart level. Effortless transformation brings effortless influence, which connects you to the right people at the right time. You find yourself looking through a different set of eyes as you begin to see opportunity where others don't see it. Oh, and let me add that you will also begin to experience effortless income.

How to Create a New Life

The exercise in this next section will immediately give you focus and direction and will literally lead to replacing your superficial desires with authentic desires which are the real you. The results will surprise you because it will strip out the sound bytes that have been running around in your head and help you get down to what is really real. I have heard others share about this process and know that it will assist you in getting in touch with what is important to you.

We typically think of our life in terms of the past, present and future. When Jesus said, *“Take no anxious thought for tomorrow...”* in Matthew 6:25, he was telling us to not get caught up in worry, to

instead look at the provision of the heavenly Father in order to gain greater clarity about our lives. He understood that just as the birds of the field and the lilies always functioned and lived to their full capacity, we also would do so as we get in the moment of His provision for our lives.

If we all live an average of 40 more years, this would mean that we have around 14,600 more days to go before we graduate to our eternal reward. The question I want to ask you is, what is a life? The answer, of course, is that a life is made of individual days and it is our experiences that shape each of these days. The experiences we have take place every single day. This means that in order for us to identify what a life without limitation really is, we have to identify what a day without limitation looks like. This exercise is meant to help you in narrowing your focus to one day. Please don't allow the simplicity of this question to lead you to pass over this exercise.

Here is the one question that will change your life forever:

"If there were no limitations or consequences, what would your average day look like?"

Let's first look at the language of this question before you get started with the answer. When I say living life without limitations, I mean living in a world where there are no financial issues, geographical issues or health issues. It also means that there are no limiting people in your life either. You know the kind, the ones that want to limit you based on past performance or wrong information.

When I say living life without consequences, I am talking about being able to live life without getting yourself into trouble. It means that you are able to live life in a way that does not cause harm to yourself or others.

As you answer the question, your answers must be things that you could do every day and not get bored or die. It is important to not go for stuff. You want to focus on experiences. If you find yourself gravitating toward stuff, ask yourself the following question to help you narrow your focus to what it is that you really want.

If I had _____, what would that give me that I don't already have now?

Whatever your answer is, you may want to ask the question again using the answer you just came up with to help you drill down to your core authentic desires. This allows you to check the whys and motivations of your life to see if they are legitimate.

In other words, I dream of driving a BMW. The question I would have to ask myself is. What would driving a BMW give me that I don't already have? Possible answers would be, a feeling of significance. It could also be that driving a BMW represents who I am. See the difference here? One is because you are trying to fill a sense of lack; the other comes from a sense of completeness.

From the moment you open your eyes in the morning, what are the first things that enter your mind, what feelings are you experiencing? Go

ahead, color your world any color you desire, reach deep into what living a perfect life would look like.

- What time would you wake up?
- What would you do in the morning?
- Who are you eating breakfast with?
- What you are thinking as you take kids to school?
- Where would you live?
- What would your house look like?
- Where would you spend the first half of your day?
- What would you have for lunch?
- Who would you eat with?
- What would your friends be like?

It is important to drill down to the seemingly mundane. The more clear you are, the more profound your outcome will be. Another way of looking at this so that you realize the seriousness is: Tell yourself that whatever you write down, you will have to live that day for the rest of your life!

As you work through this exercise you will want to move on to bigger issues, for instance:

- What would you do for personal fulfillment?
- What life purpose would you strive towards?
- What would your business be?

- What time would you start work?
- What would you actually do at work?
- What are the people you do business with like?

As you work through each of these questions you will want to include your family relationships and then begin to focus how you want to finish out the evening.

- What is your relationship like with your spouse and family members?
- What would you do for family time?
- What would you talk about or eat?
- What would you do at night?
- Who would you do it with?
- What would your thoughts be as you go to sleep?

These questions are all based on desired experiences, not goals, possessions or things. This is what it means to see the end from the beginning. It is when begin to get in touch with those things that are near and dear to our hearts that we discover our authentic desires.

Inspired Action Steps: Do you remember that I said earlier that with Godly desire comes the capacity to live it out? Your desires are your guide to what's possible for you. You really can have what you want. I have some questions that will further assist you and lead into the next chapter.

What would you want if you knew you couldn't fail?

If you woke up tomorrow morning and you discovered that during the night God had answered your prayer and everything was exactly how you wanted it to be, how would you know?

What would be different? What would you see, hear and feel? Exactly what would be going on around you that would let you know a miracle had taken place?



Chapter 13

Discover Your Purpose and Live it

Without a doubt, the signposts are all there concerning the direction and purpose of your life. Most make the mistake of looking for clues to their design and purpose outside of themselves. They wait for the affirming voice of a parent, a friend, a leader or Pastor to tell them what they were created for. The fact is that all the clues are already present on the inside of you. God's voice of direction has already been imprinted within you from birth.

As a result, everyone, and I mean everyone, has a special song to bring to this world. It is unique, no one else can do it quite like you and it is what makes you very, very special. In fact God gets a buzz when you discover and experience it. Think about it, if you are a parent, then you know what it feels like to watch your child laugh, play and experience joy in their accomplishments. That is how God feels about you! It was never His intention to hide your purpose and desire from you but somehow the thing that should be so apparent has remained invisible.

I recently read the story of a young man who was working in the financial market. His boss was a semi-retired owner of a brokerage firm who stayed in the business simply because he enjoyed the relationships he had created over the years. Bob, the young man, sat staring at the computer screen watching the fluctuations of the market and commodity trades. The question from his boss came out of nowhere.

"Bobby, you're a real ambitious, very talented, idea-driven guy. I know I'm going to read about you in the paper someday as somebody who has achieved all the material success he's ever dreamed of. But, let me ask you something: right now, at this moment, if you knew you had twenty million dollars in the bank, what would you do with your life? Would you still be sitting here with me looking at the trading screens? If you had the choice, what would you do with your life?"

Upon hearing this Bob was stunned and bewildered at the thought of such a life. It seemed like several minutes went by as he pondered the answer to the question. Bob felt that he had been handed complete control to consciously affect his circumstances - to be the puppet master versus the person dangling by the strings of his environment, upbringing and current financial worth.

There is a certain amount of freedom that Bob experienced when he was faced with that question and it helped him to identify what really were the inner desires in his heart. Let me ask you the exact same question. What would you be doing if you had twenty million dollars in the bank? What would you do with your life and would you still be doing what you are doing now?

Please take a few minutes right now and write your answers down.

Creating Your Why Statement

By now you should be getting in touch with your authentic desire, but just in case you are still having trouble figuring it out, let's try another little exercise that will assist you. I want to use the analogy of the genie in the bottle because it is something that helped me many years ago. I was Pastor of a church and working at night cleaning floors in a department store. As I worked I was walking around with earphones on, listening to an audio series. I can't remember the name of the series but what I do remember is what was being said because it emotionally moved me to tears. It wasn't the exercise itself that moved me; it was what it helped me to understand about my authentic desire in life. In an instant, while walking around in that department store in the middle of the night, I was transported in my mind and was able to peer into the future of what I was created for. That is what stirred me that night and it is those images that have stuck with me throughout my entire life.

I have adapted this exercise and have added a few things to this process to assist you in identifying your authentic desire and purpose in life. The next few moments could be the most important moments of

your entire life. Do not take for granted the simplicity of the exercise covered in the next few paragraphs.

Imagine yourself standing in an old antique store, and as you search down each aisle something catches your eye. Off in the corner of the room you see an old box full of what some would describe as an assortment of junk. Because you are the type of person who loves to find old treasures that other people have thrown away, you bend down and begin to do a quick search through the box. As you begin to pick up each item you find an old bronze piece that looks like a lamp base of some sort. As you wipe some of the dust off with the sleeve of your shirt to get a better look, billows of smoke begin to appear and pour out before you. There, standing in front of you, appears a genie that is over seven feet tall. He speaks, "I am the genie Auk La Baba, I have been imprisoned in this lamp for the last 5000 years, and I thank you for releasing me. You have been granted three wishes which must be spoken now, before this smoke clears from the air!" You hear his booming voice demand, "What is your bid, oh Master?"

Obviously shaken by what just took place, you search for thoughts and words and with your heart pounding you immediately speak out the following three wishes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now ask yourself the question, “What will these three wishes that I just wrote down give me that I don’t already have?”

Possible answers could be, more time, more freedom, the ability to

How did you do? Were you able to come up with three wishes? Did you answer the final question that was asked? I can almost guess what you wrote on those three lines that you filled out; here is a list of typical answers that I have seen from other people. One of the wishes would have something to do with having more money – that one was easy, your other wishes probably had to do with things like health, travel and even possibly love. Let’s drill down a little deeper and go another step here with the answers you gave.

Ask yourself again, but insert that final answer you gave on the blank line in this next question.

Now that I have, _____ what does that give me that I don’t already have?

Answer: _____

The sad fact of the matter is that most people are very unclear about the direction of their lives. We live life from paycheck to paycheck with likely no real dreams other than to pay off the house and car. Now, don’t misunderstand me, people accomplish significant things with their lives every day, for instance, raising a family is no small task and if that is you, then you are to be commended for it.

But to be up front about it, life has a way of stealing from us the kind of impact that we were all created to have, impact that is more than what you are experiencing now. We live in a society that has a way of diminishing our authority, siphoning our esteem away and stealing the very initiative that we were each born with. Each of us have been scripted and shaped by our world around us in one way or another. People have scripted us, teachers, society, our peers, the entertainment industry, jobs and even churches all tell us who we are and what we can achieve. The choice to go along with the “voices” is something that we all are faced with and for the most part we find ourselves sliding into compromise without even realizing it.

Recapturing the authority, esteem and initiative that was intended for you at birth then should be one of your greatest goals, so that you can become as effectual as you can be. This is part of God’s great command for each of us, that we each become good stewards of the lives that have given to each of us.

You see, most people don’t have any idea what it is they would do or achieve if given unlimited resources and wealth. I can hear your thoughts now ... you are telling yourself, “Well, I will cross that bridge when the time comes.” The fact is, if you have hopes of ever being able to even have the opportunity to cross that bridge, it will be as a result of your having a clear definition of what it is you will do with the opportunity when it comes.

Where does it all start?

The Power of a Mission Statement

One important step is to create a mission statement for your personal life. Typically it is organizations or companies that have used mission statements as a way of giving themselves a basis for direction and guidance. When was the last time you heard of an individual who had a personal mission statement? You have probably never heard of this before, so I am going to start out slowly so that you can get a good grasp of why you should have a personal mission statement. I'm going to even suggest that you consider sitting down with your children and creating a mission statement for your home and family, the results just might surprise you.

If you don't know where you are going, then you are probably using someone else's map.

What Is a Mission Statement?

It's a brief, well-thought-out document describing the basic principals and goals of a person or group. It declares clearly "what I or we stand for, and what we're dedicated to doing." It's a blueprint that guides a person's or a group's activities towards consistency, order, and desired outcomes. Such mission statements describe clearly "this is why I or we exist, and where we intend to go."

Your mission statement is really your passion statement. Why? It is because it has everything to do with your heart and core desires. It is from your passion that you discover motivation and drive to accomplish what is you really want out of life and where it is you want

to go. Truth be told, if your personal mission statement doesn't somehow reach inside of your soul and cause your heart to leap with excitement then I doubt very much that it is a true mission statement. Your mission statement should bring excitement to each day through which you move toward it. It will become your statement to the world – “This is what I was made for!”

Looking at your personal mission statement as your passion statement in the way we have described it shows us just how important it is to have one, not just for yourself but as something that can be developed for your family as well.

In order for you to fully understand what a mission/passion statement is, you need to be clear about what a mission statement is not.

Your personal mission statement is not a job or role.

The reason your personal mission statement is not your job or role is because your job or role in life can only be a division or a part of your mission statement. Your job and role is simply one of the ways that you are called to live and express your larger mission in life, it is not the mission in and of itself.

Throughout your entire life you will have many jobs or roles, these do not define who you are; they are only meant to help you fulfill your overall mission in life.

**Your personal mission statement is not
a vision, value or even a goal.**

Knowing the difference between vision, values and goals can sometimes be confusing. Each provides us with a completely different role. Here are three different simple definitions to help you understand what each of these mean.

Your Mission gives you purpose.

Your Vision gives you direction.

Your Values give you character.

There are many myths that we come to believe that can stop or hinder us from discovering our personal mission. Read through the following and see if any of them sound familiar to you.

Myth #1 My mission must impact many people.

This is a common myth that stops a lot of people from making an impact. We fall into the trap of thinking that our impact has to be large scale in order for it to make a difference. We often recognize and see the many needs around us and we feel that our individual contributions and efforts will have no effect.

The truth of the matter is that great successes are simply little success built one upon another. It goes back to the basic premise that we must always start with what is in our hand in order for more to be given.

Success is not a thing; it is not an end result that awaits you at some far-off place, success lies in doing well whatever thing you are doing now.

Myth #2 My mission is something to be afraid of.

In some cases we become mistaken that our future in terms of God's will for our lives is something to be afraid of. I think one of the primary reasons for this is that we think that God is going to make us do something that will make us miserable. As a child growing up in a church setting, I can remember the hesitancy people had regarding asking God to show them His will for their lives. The common thought was that God would call us to do something like – Go to the mission field. God's desire for you is, as Jesus put it, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4

Myth #3 My mission can be anything I want it to be.

True happiness and fulfillment can only take place as a result of the creation returning to the creator for instructions. How silly it would be for the end result of a manufacturer's creative effort to look up one day and say, "I no longer want to be what you created me to be, I will do my own thing." Anything else other than the intended purpose of the manufacturer will result in futility and anxiety.

On the other hand, there is nothing more fulfilling and complete than when you as a child of God discover the very assignment for which you were created.

Myth #4 I am not qualified or don't think I have it within me to live my mission.

“Do I have it within me to live out my mission?” is a legitimate question. The answer to that really has more to do with your passion and core desires than perhaps you realize. As for myself, I do believe you have it within you!

How do I know this?

It is because I know that our creator has placed within each of us the particular ingredients we need to make our individual destination. Think of it this way, the Creator of the universe would not have placed the passion and desire you have within you unless He also gave you the ability to attain it.

A good example of this would be geese. Geese have a genetic code written within them to fly south once a year, and they do so. To give these beautiful creatures the desire to fly south and then not give them the capability of doing so would be cruel. Desire and capacity go hand in hand! The desire you have to progress, achieve and break free proves that you have the capacity to reach God's intention for your life.

Isn't that wonderful?

Discovering Your Mission – The clues are all there

The best way to discover meaning in your life can be figured out by looking at the clues. Each and every one of us has what I call “specific spiritual DNA evidence” that points to what you were made to do and be. It is God’s fingerprint upon your life that portrays itself in some very unique ways. One of the first things you need to do before you create your personalized mission statement is to take an inventory of each of these clues in your life.

You have been given everything you need to accomplish your purpose and mission in life.

Inspired Action Steps: This entire chapter was an action step. Make sure not to just read over and not use the information to enhance your life.



Chapter 14

Positive Input and Inspirational Output

The mind is a funny thing; it is primarily a collector of information. It takes the information it receives and creates associations, connections and patterns. We are by nature learners. We referred to this earlier when we were talking about the mind as one big extensive map.

Think about the thousands of seminars, church services, Bible studies, books, magazines, Internet websites, audios and videos that you have gathered information from. It is truly amazing when you think about it. How long have you been collecting this information? You have been collecting this information throughout your entire lifetime. It is a massive storehouse of information that, if you were to somehow combine it all together, might represent not just a library of information but libraries!

Now stop and think about this. With all of this information and experiences that you have been gathering throughout your life, why aren't you enjoying more success than you already are? The tools, the

information, all the resources, past experiences are all there ready at your fingertips in order for you to be a creative genius in any number of areas that would perfectly line up with your authentic desires in life. Now that we have the Internet at our disposal, – The largest library on earth, which houses the combined knowledge and experience of the entire world, there can no longer be any excuse for failure.

A Pursuer of More Than Just Knowledge

Here is another insidious trap that we can fall into if we are not careful. It has to do with the massive information that is already at our fingertips. Obviously, what keeps us stuck is not that we lack the knowledge and information. Getting in touch with your authentic desire, writing it down and journaling about what it means to you is an important step.

I am an information hog. Yes I admit it! I am absorbing gigabytes, possibly terabytes of information everyday. There is probably not a day that goes by that I am not viewing a video or listening to an audio that is teaching and instructing me about something. I am reading and absorbing continuously, even when I am in the car. Even though I might be one smart dude, if I am not careful, I can fall into the trap that James the Apostle warns us about.

“Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like.”

But whoever catches a glimpse of the revealed counsel of God—the free life!—even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action.”

(James 1:22-25 MSG)

Hearing the Inner Voice of Inspiration

This scripture tells us to “act on what we hear.” Obviously it is important to act on the knowledge and information in our lives. Our world is full of “steps to” and “how-to” guides that we can learn from. What I want to encourage you to do is to also become aware of the inner voice of inspiration in your life. The inner voice is something that is available to each of us. Some call it the voice of God; others call it intuition or even the voice of inspiration. I like how the Message version of the Bible scripts this particular verse. It starts out with the words about the importance of “listening” and that we need to “Act on what you hear,” which begs the question, what are you hearing? Could this verse possibly be referring to the inner voice of our heart? For clearer insight into what this means, let’s back up and read the previous verse. It tells us to receive the “implanted word”. What is the implanted word? It is obviously something that is coming from the inside; it is something that has been implanted. The original language here says that it means “embodying an idea.” It goes onto say that this “idea” has the power to save your soul.

This passage goes on talk about the perfect law of liberty that sets us free from the letter of the law which is based on pious duty. When it

comes down to it, this passage is dealing with external religion, which has a lot of hot air behind it but no real power. It tells us that the power of the implanted word that comes from God Himself is a natural consequence of who we are as true hearers. It is God actualizing Himself in us at every level of our lives in profound and demonstrative ways. This kind of life doesn't come by following a rule book or "how to" guide, it only comes as a result of a life that embraces the fact that it is hidden in Christ and seated with Christ. It is the inner voice of inspiration that produces life around us. It is the inner voice of inspiration that we learn to listen to and be confident in.

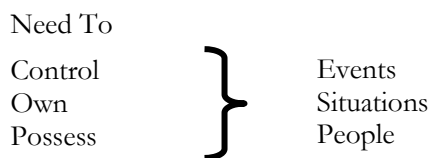
"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." Isaiah 30:21

This is what has stopped me in my life from moving forward, hearing and not putting what I know into practice. Granted, if you are in touch with your authentic desire, which really means that you are "seeing the end from the beginning," you will be connected with the information you need that will move you into the next step. Inspiration is taking place all the time, but because we are not used to hearing and acting on the inner voice of our heart, we ignore it.

We don't have to know "the how," this is where most people get stopped in their tracks. All we just have to decide on is what it is "we want!" Someone once asked, "How do I know if it is my inner voice or the voice of my head talking?"

Here is how you can tell the difference. Any time you are analyzing, interpreting, and making conclusions based on a need to control, own

or possess - events, situations or people, you are in your head and not following the inner voice of inspiration.



In many ways, this sounds like the hidden hamster wheels that we get stuck on. Our ideas and decisions are wrongly based on false assumptions. We are pursue ideas because we think we should or because we think other people will approve or validate us because of them.

My wife and I felt inspired to move to Little Rock, Arkansas from Denver, Colorado to attend a one year Missions school. We had an assurance in our hearts that this was the direction we should take. Our family did not think it was a good idea, after all, we just had our first child who was just 4 months old. We had no promise of a job waiting for us, we had just enough money to get there and pay for the first month's tuition and some place to stay.

The funny thing is that we hadn't applied yet for the school. We felt that by the time we sent our application and waited for approval, classes would have already started and it would be too late. So we packed everything we had into an open top U-Haul trailer and started down the road in our green Pinto. We must have been quite a sight when we pulled into town. It was Sunday morning and we were excited to be there. We didn't know anyone in Little Rock, so we drove straight to church that morning, parked and went in.

During the church service they had all the visitors stand up and announce who they were. We proudly told the audience that we had just driven in from Denver and were there to attend Agape School of World Evangelism! After the service, the dean of the school signaled us and called us into his office. He told us that we should have sent in our application prior to coming and that we probably had wasted our time making this trip. But somehow we were not discouraged by what we were told, somehow we knew that everything would work out and we would be accepted. As it turned out we did get accepted in the school and got started with classes, but that did not solve the money issue.

Then I had an inspired idea. The idea was to start the Little Rock Christian Service Directory! Even though I had absolutely no experience with that type of work, I knew that there were other students who did. I thought that this could be a great opportunity for creating an income for other them. I shared it with other students, as well as with one classmate I sat next to in a class and who had experience in the printing business.

You probably can guess what their response was. Not one of them could see what I was so excited about. I was not swayed, but continued to act on my inner knowing of the idea that had come to me. I placed an ad in the newspaper and hired two people on a commission only basis. Then I had an inspired idea to contact the two Christian Radio stations in Little Rock and traded out advertising with them. This gave me massive exposure to get my message out about the soon to be published Christian Services Directory.

Then, I had another inspired thought! The free advertising that I had been given could be used to leverage myself further. We were able to give away free radio spots to Christian businesses who advertised with us. My radio spots would advertise the Christian Services Directory and then I would showcase our advertiser of the day! We sold advertising, made enough money to pay for our one year stay in Little Rock, Arkansas and were instrumental in publishing the first Christian business directory this city had ever seen. This entire endeavor was started with no out of pocket money, only an idea! Oh, and let me add this thought here. As you are moving forward on the ideas and inspirational thoughts you have, other good things will come your way as well.

As a result of acting on one inspirational idea of making a move across the country, we got to build relationships with the Filipino community in Little Rock , who volunteered to collate the directory for us for free. An anonymous donor showed up one day at the school and paid for my entire year's tuition! One of the Filipino friends we met had a relative in Manila who hosted us during our stay in that city. Because of this relationship, we were able to Minister God's grace to the sister's daughter, who was traumatized by something that had taken place in her life and as a result could not communicate and walked around like a zombie. She was miraculously healed and set free. We spent the next three years seeing God minister to thousands of people there. We witnessed many signs and wonders as a result; some of which, if I were to tell them to you, might be difficult to believe.

Hearing and acting on the inspiration in your heart will take you anywhere you want to go in life. It is all there, always available to take you to the next step.

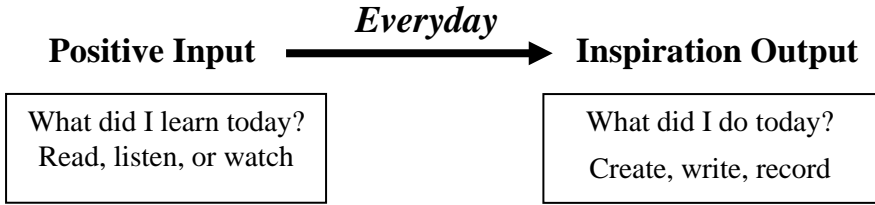
It is one thing to notice the moments of inspiration in our lives, and an entirely different experience to act on those moments. The following statements are a few common blocks that keep us in a state of inner paralysis, preventing us from “going for it” in life:

- "I can't do that."
- "Nothing ever works out for me."
- "I can't handle rejection."
- "I am not OK if this doesn't turn out the way I want it to."
- "What will people think?"
- "What if I fail?"

Realize that it is always better to step forward into growth then to step backward into safety. How can you be sure that you are taking action in your life? It is so easy to simply gather information without allowing it to have a positive effect in our lives. Here is one thing I am doing to solve this issue and I think it will help you as well.

I call it, The Law of Positive Input and Inspirational Output!

Positive input and inspirational output dictates that if I am receiving information then I had better be putting it to use or I will lose it. Let me draw you a picture of what this looks like below.



Input can come from just about anywhere. It can be a deliberate pursuit of the knowledge you need, but now that you are more attuned to your authentic desire you will become even more aware of the information you need that will take you where you need to go. When inspiration comes, meaning information that grabs my attention, I become aware that this is possibly a direction that I need to consider and pursue. How do you pursue inspiration? Well, that depends on your authentic desires, personality, gifts and talents. For me, it means creating, writing, recording, and audio or video. It might mean ideas about how to get my message out into the world more effectively. For instance, I know that the Holy Spirit is trying to move me further where it concerns living out and experiencing a fulfilled completed life. If I am in listening to a message and something specifically jumps out at me, whether a word, thought or idea, I realize that this is an area I need to move toward and pursue.

How often has inspiration come to you and later you couldn't remember what it was? You might have even written it down, but there it sits as a note between the pages of your Bible week after week without the slightest thought that maybe, just maybe, you should pursue the information. Pursuing information might mean doing some self study, or it might mean taking certain steps.

Keep in mind, if a creek is followed it will lead you to a stream and if a stream is followed, it will lead you to a river. If a river is followed it will take you to the ocean! If you follow and pursue knowledge and inspired thought, when acted upon it will lead you to the bigger picture.

Living From Inspiration And Wisdom

Within each of us is lives the source of infinite wisdom. This is what Solomon asked God for and as a result he lived out and achieved many great things. Having an inner awareness that the answers are all there keeps us on track with the directions and solutions that we need in our life. In fact it is more reliable than any expert's advice or opinion. Wow, why do I say that? We have all asked people for advice to tell us "what to do" and then we ended up not doing it. Why don't we do it? Because when you are asking an Expert or mentor for advice their advice is coming from the inner voice of wisdom they followed to get where they are. Although this sounds like a good idea, we need to be sensitive to the voice in our own heart and life. I am not telling you to close your ears to experienced people who have gone before you, but how you interpret and live out your personal success story will be uniquely yours, based on factors that only belong to you.

A great example is in the world of church growth. Often churches that have experienced phenomenal growth become a stumbling block for smaller churches. Why? Because out of these growing churches comes a gush of books, CD's, Church Growth Seminars that everyone tries to follow by the letter. Instead of following the inner voice of their heart for their community they are following after the methods that

worked for someone else's community. Every community is different and unique.

Is that to mean we can't learn from each other? No it does not. What it means is that we should never relinquish the inner voice of our heart for another's. Remember, we are each unique, and that means God flows through each of us in unique ways. Learning how to trust in the inner intuition that each of us has takes time, but as we do we will learn what it means to live authentic lives.

Other Things That Stop Us from Moving On Inspiration

One gal, while talking on the topic of relationships, was commenting on the extreme drama that was going on in her life. She wondered out loud why the men who she thought of as just friends had expectations that always went beyond just a platonic relationship. "What is wrong with all these men?" was her loud complaint! From where I stood, it was obvious that there was something wrong with the picture she was painting; I knew that she was not addressing the real issue. She was a constant flirt and dressed provocatively and used it as a way of getting things done for her. As a result the relationships around her were basically built on a lie.

It's interesting how we choose our own misery and then complain about it as if we are innocent victims. Until she addresses the real issue, any relationship she enters into will be done under false pretenses, as they will be doomed to fail and in the end she will never be able to keep meaningful friendships.

Attempting to solve the problem, while avoiding the bigger picture, compounds the problem and keeps us from moving forward. The lie that many of us labor under comes from what others have defined us to be. Because we haven't been told the truth about ourselves, we cannot be true to the truth of ourselves. As a result we live our lives chasing an illusion of happiness within a life that is going nowhere but down. For this girl, what she needed was to learn that she was complete and that in Jesus, she lacks nothing.

The Lies We Choose To Believe

Why do we choose to stay where we are? One reason we sometimes don't move forward is called "secondary gain." What is "secondary gain"? It is when we are not willing to let go of things in our lives and go for what we really want because we are afraid of losing something else.

Secondary gain tells me:

- The misery I am experiencing is worth it because I am receiving other benefits by staying where I am.
- I will no longer receive the attention I feel I deserve if I change for the better.
- I might lose the relationships around me if I stop my controlling behavior.

We disqualify ourselves from living an abundant fulfilled life because of the lies we believe. Obviously the lie of secondary gain finds its roots in someone who has not understood God's complete provision for their lives. They are basically living from the outside in and not from the inside out.

Here are some last words that will assist you in connecting to the inner voice of inspiration in your life.

Get Quiet

One of the first things you need to do is to make it a habit to have times where you can get quiet. I used to think that prayer was all about my expressing every concern and need that I had about myself and the world. I use to know of a Pastor who would record the names of his entire church congregation onto a tape recorder. He would then play them while praying. I guess he didn't want to miss anybody. This is not what I am talking about doing. The central need in any of our lives is gaining wisdom in those quiet times, especially wisdom where it concerns this free gift that has been given to us and how we can experience it every single day.

Getting quiet, pausing in the midst of a world that is full of turmoil will do more for you than anything else. I realize that I can spend hours and hours working and not get closer to what it is I want in life. But, if I simply take time to pause I can accomplish more than I ever thought possible. Getting quiet might mean playing inspirational music and soaking it all in. It might mean taking a walk and bringing your attention to the stillness and quiet within. I love to take walks and

quietly sit by a creek, listening to my heart and the Holy Spirit's voice within me.

Take a snow globe and shake it up, watch how the flecks float around. This represents how the mind with all of its thoughts, fears and worries flood and keep you from hearing the inner voice of your heart. Now, allow the flecks of snow to float down to a rest. This represents you becoming calm and quiet. It is from this place that you will connect with the voice of inspiration.

Ask Yourself

Ask yourself what it is you would like to experience regardless of any other conditions (lack of finance, limitations,)? One person's answer might be, I would like to experience what it feels like to live in my dream home. For another person, Lauren Miller, a mother of three who was diagnosed with stage three, grade-three breast cancer and given a fifty percent chance of surviving, and the diagnosis came just five days before her divorce was final, what she desires is to experience "living".

What Does It Feel Like?

The third thing is to ask yourself is what would having this experience feel like. If the experience is to live in a new home, what would you feel as a result? If you are facing the death sentence that Lauren faced, begin to experience the feelings of having life. The more you practice the feelings of the experience the more real it becomes. The subconscious mind doesn't know the difference between what is real and not real and will go to work to put you in the arena where faith works.

Later when you find yourself facing the challenges of fear and other negative emotions you can easily go back to feelings of the positive experience that you previously were practicing, and find strength.

Inspired Action Steps: Taking action, that is what this chapter was all about. Imagine just how much more productive you can be if you simply follow the action steps in this chapter everyday.

One Scriptures about opportunity is Eccl. 9:11 The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all. The NLT translates that last verse as: by being in the right place at the right time.

Being in the right place at the right time takes place because you are preparing yourself for opportunity that you want in life.



Chapter 15

The Kingdom Of Expansion

I think it is safe to assume that by now you are pretty much sold on the idea that God has placed genius on the inside of you. You have been created and empowered in unique ways that demonstrates beauty and life. You are somebody who has value! You are somebody who has within you an incredible gift that the world is longing for.

Living an Empowered life is God's purpose for every boy, girl, man and woman on the Earth. It doesn't matter where you live, your ethnicity or you social status. The message of Jesus that the "Kingdom of God has come" is the same to one and all.

It was not only the purpose for which He had been sent to preach this message, He is the initiator and living testament of the message.

"But He said to them, 'I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose'" (Luke 4:43).

In the beginning God put man in the Garden to expand its borders and territories throughout the Earth. The garden held within it all that was good, trees, plants, flowers, meadows, hills, waterfalls, the birds of the air, animals. The list is endless. Every molecule, particle and atom of life that resided in this place resonated with perfection. Expansion was encoded in at every level; nothing was left untouched by the Creator's hand. The DNA of God's essence was as much a part of it as it was a part of Him.

The crowning jewel of the Garden was of course its greatest prize. No heavenly creature could ever understand the reasoning of this greatest of creation's acts. What's this? Man made after the image of God? Man, a created being, given a position of authority to rule and reign over the Earth?

But as awe inspiring as this may have been to the heavenly hosts, not one of them could ever fathom the depth of the full plan and purpose of God for this man, this created being. Wait until they realize this, God chooses to willingly take upon Himself the form of a man, a servant, and die as one of them.

The book of Philippians tells the story of God's taking on the role of man this way.

"...but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man" (Philippians 2:7)

The Amplified version states it a little differently, it tells us that even though He possessed equality and the fullness of God, He stripped Himself of all those privileges in order to assume the guise of a servant, in that He became like men and was born a human being. It goes on to say that He abased and humbled Himself [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross!

In this one epic moment called time and Earth, the God of all creation, the creator of the universe and all that is in it, steps out of a place of prestige and privilege and debases Himself to the level of this man.

But to what end, what would compel such an act?

Perhaps we can get a clue from the words that Jesus spoke to the Father in John 17. In it we read profound words which signified that what had been started was now complete!

“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

Man in God, God in man? This prayer of Jesus puzzled me for years until I read the words of Paul in Ephesians 2:6.

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:”

Perhaps my mind was too twisted with religion to accept the truth of what this really said about who Jesus was and who I was in Him. For

the first time I began to understand what God's love and intention for me was.

It wasn't just Jesus the Christ who was sitting at the right hand of God. Jesus became a man and now as a man He is sitting at the right hand of God in Heaven. Not only that, I was sitting right there with him! That must have been a real newsflash when all of heaven finally "Got it!" God becomes a man, He then makes this man an equal by sitting him on His right hand and reigns with him for all eternity! I realize that statement sounds incredible, and even sacrilegious to some. But then I remember the fact that Jesus became all that I was so that I could become all that He is! For myself, I am humbled by the thought of His goodness to me.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

(Eph. 2:4-10)

A New Twist

And get this, God in His restorative work did not just return us back to the place where we started. He didn't just transplant us back to the Garden of Eden to live in paradise, He did something much better! God put paradise on the inside of you! Think about how powerful a statement that is. That which was on the outside now resides on the inside! The Garden is on the inside of us and now we are exploring, discovering and expanding the borders of what He has given to us in the here and now!

I don't know what you think of when you think of a garden, I think of several things. I think of peace and tranquility. I think of complete provision and abundance. That is because everything I need in life is in that Garden. In the same way that God was seen, felt and experienced at every level of life in the Garden, so it is in my life. Every single thing in the garden produced after its kind! Life is unhindered, unobstructed, completely fluid and free flowing. From the trickle of a stream to the roar of a water fall, it's all on the inside of me!

Jesus wasn't kidding when He said to the woman at the well, "*But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.*" (John 4:14). Everything you have need of is right there inside of you ready to meet every need, want or desire in your life. It is interesting to note that scripture tells us that out of the Garden of Eden flowed a river that then became separated and became four rivers. The source of life always flows from its center, and so it does where it concerns your life. God in you, you in God!

Can you see how God has placed you in a position of ownership? What you do with your garden is completely up to you. It is apparent that there are people in this world who choose to do nothing with their garden, they simply discount and ignore it. There are others who don't realize that they are owners of a garden that contains the very resources that they are searching for. They have written themselves off long ago, because of what others have told them, and by what they have believed.

There was a family many years ago who wanted to come to America. They saved all of their money so that they could purchase tickets on an ocean liner. This family scrimped and saved every bit of money they could get their hands on. Finally the day came to purchase their tickets and so they packed everything up for the trip. They knew that they barely had enough money for the tickets so they decided to also pack all the food they would need for the trip. They took plenty of rice as well as a few vegetables with them.

During the trip, each day they would hear the dinner bell ring and that became their signal to eat as well. From time to time they would walk by the dinner hall on their way to their cabin. They would look through the window to see everyone enjoying themselves. While in their cabin eating their rice they could at times smell the delicious aromas of full course meals. The kids would eat the rice while imagining eating a big roast dinner.

At the end of their journey, when they were pulling into the New York Harbor, there came a knock on their cabin door. When they opened the door there stood the captain of the ship. With a look of concern he greeted the family and then proceeded to ask them why they

hadn't joined them in the dining hall for any of the meals. The head of the family spoke up and explained the situation of not having the money to pay for the meals and that they had been eating their own food. The look on the Captain's face was almost pure shock as he explained, "I am so sorry, there must have been a misunderstanding, all of your meals were included with the purchase price of your ticket."

This story really speaks of how God has provided everything that we have need of and the importance of having the knowledge of what has been given to us so that we are able to partake of it. Yes, Can you now see that everything has been provided for you, that you are the owner of this vast and beautiful place called the heart? The question is, how do you want to dress it, what name to you want to give each aspect of it as its borders are expanded? I remind you again of the words that Jesus spoke to us, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" The words "good pleasure" here mean to think good, be well pleased, be willing!

Some people think that God has to be persuaded to act on their behalf. Somehow they have come to believe that there is some secret formula to release the miraculous in their life. That it is something that is to be had through much anguish and struggle.

Listen! It is the Father's joy to bless you and give you all good things that pertain to life and godliness; it is what He gets pleasure from. Yes, God smiles and get's pleasure each time you discover new territories.

The garden also represents the place where satan first entered into the garden in order to tempt Eve. The good news is that he no longer has open access to the garden of your life, if you don't want him to. That part of your life can't be invaded because satan has been rendered powerless. Now don't misunderstand me here, he always loves an audience and if you want to give attention to his stupid empty tactics, he will oblige you. One way he works is to get you to fall into the belief that the answers to your life are outside yourself, this again refers to the "hidden hamster wheels" that people run on, those beliefs that tell you that you are not an owner, that happiness comes outside the provision that is already yours, the tree of what is already ours versus the lie that says that answers for happiness are still to be had.

Scripture tells us that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." The original language in this passage tells me that we are something that has never existed before. In other words, we are somehow different from Adam and Eve. This passage goes on to tell us that now all things are of God! I placed an exclamation point at the end of that sentence for a reason, because it is talking about you.

"For all things are of God who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation."

(2 Cor. 5:18)

It's up to you to discover this free flowing gift of life that has been provided to you.

Throughout the ages man has been searching for this secret. Somewhere written within the genetic code of our lives there is a knowing, a sense that we were created for amazing things. A life long lost or one that is still to be gained. For generations men have written, dreamed and have had glimpses of a life that holds no barrier or limits.

Stories, legends and folklore all point to an inner desire of man to soar above his current condition to live a life that Jesus modeled, promised and then gave us. Jesus was approached by the Pharisees one day and they demanded to be told when the kingdom of God should come. Jesus answered them and said, *“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”* (Luke 17:20-21)

When I think of the Kingdom of God, I can’t help but be reminded of the Prophet Isaiah’s words concerning Jesus. *“For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder...” “Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end,”* (Isaiah 9:6-7) The word here for “increase” is also interpreted as abundance. Not only is the Kingdom of God inside of us but everything that Kingdom represents, the Kingdom of Expansion, and that expansion will have no end!

This would seem to fit in with Jesus’ own description of what the kingdom of God is like. *“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of tall seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”* (Luke 13:18–19) *“The Kingdom of God is like unto*

leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.” (Matthew 13:33)

What is the makeup of a mustard seed? It spreads and grows and expands – a single seed will grow into a tree, a single tree will produce enough seeds to plant a great field. And what is the makeup of leaven or yeast? It expands. In a single night it can expand a hundred times in size.

Go back over any of the miracles of increase in the Bible and see if they are not all miracles of expansion. What was it that caused the oil and meal to last so that one measure of oil and a little meal fed Elijah and the widow and her son for an indefinite time? How did the miracle of increase and supply take place when Elisha told the other widow woman to gather vessels to be filled with enough oil to save her sons from bondage? How was Jesus able to take the five loaves and two fishes and turn them into a feast that fed more than five thousand people? They all happened by realizing that the kingdom of God has within it the miracle of expansion!

You see, the greatest teacher of all time, greater than Solomon himself, walked among the impoverished, the ignorant, the weak and the diseased. The question is, what did He teach them? His message could have easily been about how to find riches, how they could become craftsmen like He was as a carpenter’s son, and turn it into provision. He could have taught them how to take from those more fortunate around them. No, He didn’t teach them any of these things.

He instead revealed to them the heart of a loving Father who possessed all life, all health and all riches and who was willing to share His kingdom with humanity. He taught them that provision was theirs and that God was going to demonstrate this fact through what was about to take place through His own son. Never again would there be any reason for man to suffer except be it by his own refusal to believe. The Father would willingly give all that they needed in the exact proportion that they believed in Him.

Jesus brought this message of peace, hope and good will to all mankind, that the “as it should be of God” has now come, they were to only ask believing and as they believed so it would be unto them. Creating an inner belief for your life starts by realizing that potential is already in you; expansion is as much a part of your nature as it is God’s.

Inspired Action Steps: Expansion starts with a revelation of knowing who you are. Secondly the reality and sense of ownership takes place as you seek out and discover new possibilities of what that means to you in your life through the use of your imagination.

Allow yourself to imagine what living this incredible life means to you on a personal level.



Chapter 16

Empowered For Business

Unfortunately, until recently the church has not seen business as a vital part of what we would call Christian ministry. As a result we have not been very good at releasing or encouraging people into the marketplace for ministry, when in fact it is one of the greatest arenas in which true impact can be made. Which two statements sound more plausible to you, “Join a local church and change your community” or “Get involved in business and change your community”? In essence we have told people that if they don’t fit into the stereotypical “ministry roles”, their primary ministry is to now go into the workplace and earn money to fund the church, where “real ministry” is taking place.

Even though a church may have many good outreach ministries that reach out into the community, it also has many limitations. For instance, typical church ministries include outreach to the poor through feeding and clothing programs, marriage crisis counseling, or working with addicts. Most outreaches are shortsighted because they focus

mostly on reaching the down and out. This leaves huge sectors of our society untouched by the church.

For years, the organized Church has sought to make an impact on its culture through other religious activities as well, such as city wide prayer meetings, intercessory prayer, spiritual mapping, and so on. Instead of these efforts having brought us closer to reaching our society we are becoming more and more disconnected in our ability to make a positive impact. This is, I believe, because we in the Church have not equipped or encouraged the average person to see themselves fully empowered to follow their passion as ministry no matter what it may look like in the marketplace. We need to show people that by simply following and living out of their hearts they can have huge impact in their world.

I believe that every person has a passion and every passion has value. Turning that value into opportunities should be considered a normal part of our Christian life. What kind of opportunities are there? There are all kinds of opportunities! Opportunities for profit in business, opportunities to be self-sufficient, opportunities to have more impact and influence, opportunities to give and touch a world for which you were uniquely designed for.

Can our world be touched through people simply living their dreams and passions? Absolutely! If you embody the message of this book, you will reach and touch a world that is hurting, and don't worry, people will find you. Opportunities to share the love of Jesus will open up all around you.

There's a world in which you are rewarded for your uniqueness. A world where you make money simply by being and becoming who you are and who you were meant to be! It is a world where you begin to see that all things are possible.

The sad thing is that we have failed to affirm to the worker at IBM, the clerk at Wal-Mart, the nurse at the hospital or the sixth-grade teacher at the elementary school that they have a passion and thus have value, that their value is to be translated into a life of fulfillment that touches a world, that it is as important as any ministry that takes place inside the four walls of their local congregation meeting. Can you imagine the impact that can happen once people begin to live life out in this manner? Instead of separating, compartmentalizing our Christian life from our secular life we embrace fully who we are and live it out with passion and fervor.

“Although churches in the U.S. have spent more than \$530 billion dollars on ministry activities since 1980, the proportion of adults who are born again has remained virtually the same during the last 15 years.”

(1995 Barna Research Study)

A recent survey reveals that more than 90% of church members do not feel they are being equipped by the Church to apply their biblical faith in their daily work life. As a result, they are ineffective for Christ at their places of employment. In other words, by not equipping those in the Church to discover their God given potential, we allow them to lose their passion for life. Instead of being empowered, they are disempowered and become empty “droids.” The Bible says that where

there is no vision people perish. Showing people that they have been empowered by God gives people permission to dream!

“May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us--yes, establish the work of our hands.”

(Ps 90:17)

On May 25, 1994, while he was sleeping, Abel Mbewe (at left) heard a loud voice say “Chicken, chicken, that is the future”. Two years later, Abel started a small scale poultry project at the backyard of his home in Zambia. After extensive reading and consultations with poultry extension officers, he bought equipment and 100 tiny, day-old chicks. Since then, his vision has continued to expand. *Dominion Poultry*, a growing chicken business operating using Kingdom Business principles, is committed to meeting spiritual, social and economic needs of the poor through establishing micro-enterprises and reinvesting resources into the community.

Author and pastor, Eric Bahme didn't know the Lord would speak to him in a profound way after he visited the Microsoft campus in Redmond Washington in 1993. The question the Lord asked him prompted Bahme to "think outside the box." That birthed his visionary "Mission-Based Entrepreneur (MBE) model." He started with the purchase of two rundown hotels. After purchasing the Quality and the Rodeway Inn, in Portland, Oregon in 2004, it took another four years and \$6 million dollars to remodel the two into one five-star, 163 room hotel. Today, with more than 33,000 yearly guests, the income from 98 rooms, and 4 suites equips the church to give \$120,000-\$150,000 of annual in-kind donations. In addition, MBE reserves 64 of the 163 rooms for ministry use.

"I believe one of the next great moves of God is going to be through the believers in the workplace". Dr. Billy Graham

"God has begun an evangelism movement in the workplace that has the potential to transform our society as we know it". Franklin Graham

Not only are we empowered for success in business but we are also empowered to be Agents of Change within our communities as we live out our uniqueness in powerful ways. Our world was never meant to be reached through the building of more church buildings and the agreement of a committee. It was meant to be reached the same way Jesus did. He moved through the sea of humanity and simply touched the needs of people as a natural course of his understanding who He was and what He was all about.

Inspired Action Steps:

Understanding the value of the passion that is already in you and then serving the world around you as a natural course of who you are is the starting point. In what ways do you see your passion touching lives in your community?



Chapter 17

Empowered For Influence

Influence, we all have it! How important is it? Where does it come from? How do you get more of it? Most people really never think about it. They either take it for granted or at least they never think purposely about the subject as to how it relates to them. Influence is really a gift if used correctly. It is something we all have, but most of the time we underestimate its true power.

I often refer to a person's influence as something that you should put some thought into and act out on with intention and purpose. This is especially true if you are in business for yourself. After all, a Realtor for instance can only grow and build their business to the degree of their influence or the size of their database, right?

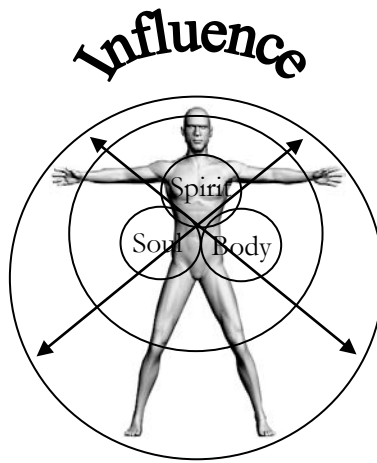
Really, when you think about it, true influence should grow as a natural consequence of your understanding that you are empowered. As you embrace the truth of who you are in Christ, understand and embrace your authentic desire, and begin to experience the feelings of "ownership" that is already yours, expansion takes place naturally.

When I speak of expansion, I am referring to life expansion in all areas, Mental, Emotional and Physical. The reason that I don't list your spirit is that it is already one hundred percent perfect, and does not lack one thing more in order for you to approved and accepted by your Father. From the moment you are born again, you are reborn fully equipped to function in all that God has for you. We now need to come into the knowledge of what is already ours.

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:2-4)

Notice in the above verse that all thing, that means EVERYTHING that has to do with living life and godliness comes through the knowledge of Him. Then it goes on to say that it is by these exceeding great and precious promises that we become partakers of the divine nature! Where is that divine nature? It is in our spirit man the moment we accept the free gift of righteousness (the “as it should be” of God). As our minds are renewed to what is already ours, expansion begins to take place. What we had become accustomed to as our “normal” begins to change in dramatic ways; limitations which once held us lose their influence and power in our lives. We begin to view life differently, the words of Jesus that “Nothing is impossible to them that believe” become our new accepted norm.

Inner expansion always precedes outer expansion; it is not the other way around. John the Apostle points this out when he wrote, “*Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.*” (3 John 3:1). John understood that as the inner prosperity of the soul takes place – the mind, will and emotions, our outer world cannot help but be influenced. Everything starts at the heart level and expands outward.



Jesus was the most influential person that ever walked the Earth. He lived out of the knowledge of who He was as well what His mission was all about. Love was the natural end result of His connection to the Father. His love (influence) was unavoidable and always sought the greater good of those around Him.

Seeking the highest good of those around you is the secret of all influence. A person who seeks the highest good of those around them will always stand head and shoulders taller in the

hearts and minds of their family, network of friends, colleagues, customers, employees and even their boss! Seeking the highest good of others is what Jesus did and it gave Him a voice that has brought impact and change in the lives of millions. Seeking the highest good of those around you means that you consider those around you to be “under your protection.” What exactly does “under your protection” mean? Zig Ziglar is quoted as saying “You Can Only Get What You Want, If You Help Enough Other People Get What They Want.”

Seeking the highest good for others means seeing and viewing life from someone else’s eyes. It is what Dale Carnegie teaches in his book “How to Win Friends and Influence People,” in which he tells you to start by becoming genuinely interested in other people. People who realize that you are seeking their highest good tend to be more responsive and open to you. Giving and adding value in any business situation gives you preeminence in the marketplace. If you focus on giving true value in all your relationships you will become a trusted advisor. Manipulation, coercion and maneuvering in order to win more from prospects, customers, employers, friends and colleagues might win a short term gain, but will never last over the long term and will never make you a trusted friend.

Adding Value In Business

The secret of any successful business is not in the idea or product, it is the recognition of a problem that needs to be solved. Recognizing and solving problems will overwhelmingly win you more business than

you can handle. An example of this would be to get inside the head of a customer who is going to the store to shop for a drill. His entire motivation is to solve a problem; he wants to drill a hole. Therefore, if you want to sell drills, you should advertise information about making holes – NOT information about drills!

Remember This: The fastest way to get rich in life is to solve other people's problems. Do you think McDonalds is in the hamburger business? They're not. Do you think Subway is in the sandwich business? Not anymore, these days they are in the weight loss business. Do you think Las Vegas is in the gambling business or do you think they are in the entertainment business?

You are a problem solver, a trusted adviser, someone who is watching out for your customers' best interests. Once you get this, it changes how you act and follow up with those with whom you do business. It is no longer just about the money you make, although you will make more money. It's not the one time sale and waving goodbye. If you truly have the best interest of your customer at heart and you believe that the solutions you have will continue to solve their problem, then you will become more proactive, not less. Realizing that these people are all friends means you have made a deep connection with them. Go ahead and reach out to them with care and concern, learn new things about who they are. You might be surprised by the results at the level of impact and influence you will gain.

Adding Value as a Person

Adding value creates influence! Adding value is easy if you can step outside of yourself and think about the central topic of every person on Earth. That topic is of course themselves, this is the one common denominator between us all. The one who understands this truth and knows how to step outside of the realm of self-focus, wins the prize of master influencer. Many years ago a telephone company created a study of the conversations that people had in order to find out which word was used the most. You probably already know what that word was, it was the personal pronoun, “I”. Dale Carnegie wrote that out of 3,990 times in 500 conversations the word “I.” “I.” “I.” “I.” was used. It seems, we are 100% at the center of our own universe. Pick up a photo of a group shot with you hidden in a crowd, whose picture to you instantly see first?

Jesus was of course a master influencer and the reason He was so good was that He was genuinely interested in other people. Because of His concern He continually added value. Adding value starts by finding out what is important to the person with whom you are wanting to connect and not the other way around. It can start out with a simple question; “How can I help you?” Jesus did this all the time, even when it was obvious to everyone there what the person needed.

How good are you at being a value connector? According to speaker Larry Benet, there are three important questions that can be asked that will immediately allow you to connect and find out what is important to

someone. You will then be able to find ways you can add value to their life. The three questions are:

What are you most passionate about in life?

What do you like to do for fun?

What is your most important project?

A value connector makes a connection by finding out what is most important to a person and then helps them get it. This in the end creates value! You might be saying to yourself that you don't have anything to offer. Earlier I wrote that everyone has value and that value creates opportunities. The value you add to someone can come in many forms. Give of your time, provide them with a resource, or connect them to somebody who can help them.

Systematic follow up is also an important key factor as well, so don't forget to ask for their permission to follow up with them. "Would you give me permission to stay in touch with you if I or my network can add value to you in the future?"

Go ahead and purpose to make magic moments happen for others around you everyday and you will become a master influencer. Remember, the value that is already in you opens the doors to opportunities. Recognizing the opportunities around you starts in the areas of contribution and service. You are rewarded to the degree that you are willing to solve problems for other people.

Inspired Action Steps:

Invest in people! Instead of holding them back trying to get them to fulfill your destiny. Instead, help them fulfill their own and you will be handsomely rewarded.



Chapter 18

Leadership, Empowered To Serve

We hear this message of grace and the power of the gospel and what it can do for our lives. It is not a message that is to be set aside as simply a religious exercise we are to perform once a week on Sundays. In the context of this book, it really isn't a religious exercise at all but as much of a part of our lives as the air that we breathe on a moment by moment basis.

There have been times in the past when my wife and I have visited with other Christians only to find out that conversing about God, the Bible or our relationship in Jesus was considered taboo. For one reason or another, the definitions of what it means to be a Christian did not fit in with their normal life experience. That is a frightful condition in a Christian.

As we have seen, God's amazing grace is something that goes beyond the forgiveness of sin; it profoundly affects every area of our

lives, if we allow it to. Every part of your life should be touched by this message.

We have learned that every person has a passion, a specific desire that is yearning to be expressed and lived out. The Bible tells us that it is these gifts that have been given to each of us “without repentance.” What this means is that God can’t change his mind, these gifts cannot be taken back or revoked. They may have faded from our memories because we have reprioritized them as being of less importance because of setbacks and disappointments of the past. What used to be a life full of desire can easily be allowed to slip away, but this does not change the fact that our inbuilt desires are still present within us.

The important point I want you to get here is that every person on this planet has a passion! Every passion has value and that value provides and gives us opportunity. Realizing and discovering your gift is one of the most important discoveries you can make in life. Why? Because the moment you discover your passion and gift is the moment a leader is born. The conventional definitions of leadership don’t fit what Jesus introduced to us in the Gospels when he taught about and demonstrated what leadership really is. It has nothing to do with who is following you but it has everything to do with that specific gift that is on the inside of you.

Conventional definitions about leadership are all about the size of your organization or how many are in your employment or control. I have heard it said that successful leadership is really based on how many people are following you, or even how many are afraid of you. These are all definitions from our culture about what leadership is. I

believe that definitions like these have stifled the majority into living lives of quiet submission, when in fact the opposite is true.

Walk into the any room filled with people and ask, “How many are leaders here?” Most would shrink back into the shadows in order to defer to those who have stronger personality styles. Go into the workplace and ask about leadership and you will soon discover that few really recognizes themselves as being a leader. They will point to someone else and defer, but taking ownership regarding our own senses of leadership has all too often been blurred by our distorted definitions of what true leadership entails.

Real leadership is not about mastering people, dominating people, or controlling people. If you look closely, most people who say they are leaders are really controllers. They try to control people and believe that is leadership. According to God, other humans are off limits from our control!

The reason people don't see themselves as leaders is because they have perceived leadership to be control of others. We have been led to believe that leadership is something that we are either born with or not born, with based upon our personality type. Many believe that if you have an A or B type personality or are defined as a Choleric personality then you are a leader. We have been told that because someone has gone to school and learned management skills that this makes that person a leader. Other definitions that we have been led to believe include the idea that leadership is based upon your social status.

None of these definitions have anything to do with the true concept of what leadership is. Many of these ideas have come from the many mixed messages that we received as we grew up. Not only are many of these wrong definitions in our culture and society generally taught to us when we were young, but they have also been translated and adapted into our home environments as well as into our churches.

As a growing child I had an innate desire to become great, to do something wonderful with my life. This is something that all humans have in common. As children we all had that sense that nothing was impossible. We would frighten our parents by jumping off tall objects pretending to fly like a superhero. We didn't know any limits, our imagination was our playground. We went out and did things without any hesitation. We would pretend to be in spaceships, run through jungles and leap from buildings. You see, this is that incredible innate desire that each of us has to be great, awesome and wonderful! That is part of the DNA of who you are as a person. Denying that fact, moving away and shifting away from that incredible you, only moves you toward a life of stress and frustration.

So embrace the greatness of the capacity of God within your life, it is who you are. That is what you are about, to do something awesome in this world. To shift and move things that need to be moved, to be whom God has called you to be! There are absolutely no limitations in front of you to living out this incredible life. The only limitations you have are those false beliefs and mindsets that you have become accustomed to in your life and that you have accepted as your reality.

Another thing I was taught growing up in church was that it was the meek and lowly that inherited the Earth. I was also told that in self-denial was the pathway to greatness. You can imagine what the result was in my little mind. I was reminded by well-meaning preachers that pride was one of the greatest of all sins. As a result I became conflicted in the choices and decisions in my life and lacked the confidence to step out on the inner desires that I had. I wanted to do it “God’s way” and certainly didn’t want to be in “sin”.

Something else I heard as a child in church was that leadership was something that was to be confined inside the four walls of the church, that it could not be demonstrated outside the church. My parents felt strongly that I was supposed to be a preacher, and so anything that was different was downplayed. I had an incredible entrepreneurial drive as a kid and as a result was very creative, like the time that I discovered a citrus-based weight loss program that was typed out on a small piece of paper on my parent’s dresser. It read, “Lose Ten Pounds in Ten Days”. It didn’t take me but two days after finding that weight loss program before I had placed a classified ad asking for \$1 to learn the secret recipe to losing weight. And guess what? People sent me money!

Leadership was a part of me in the area of creating ideas to make money but yet I was told that in order to live out my passion it had to be in the context of being a preacher. Thank goodness my parents did support some of my ideas, like the Bible bookstore I opened in my city at age 17 and eventually sold at a profit.

Throughout my life I struggled against the two conflicting voices. One was the drive and talent to be able to take business ideas and create

something out of nothing, the other was that I was “out of God’s will” for my life if I did anything but preach. Can you see how the mixed messages we hear from our society, church and family can cause frustration? Most, if not all of the common perceptions about and definitions of what greatness and leadership are have stopped us from living out our lives in the ways that God has designed us to live. Who me, a leader? Me? What do I have to give, what do I have to offer my world?

Jesus turned the tables upside down on the idea of what greatness and leadership are. All of our old definitions are now old school in comparison to what Jesus introduced to us. You see, Jesus hung on a cross so that He not only could bring forgiveness but so that He could also wrap Himself around every corpuscle, every molecule, every DNA strand in your body so that you could live a life without limitation. He revolutionized the entire concept of what leadership and greatness are.

What is leadership and what does it take to be great? They are the result of personally discovering your gift, your uniqueness that makes you special, preparing it, fine tuning it so that it can be brought to the world. It is your unique brand being served to the world. What is a brand? Most companies that we are familiar with have created a brand. Companies like Coke, Pepsi, Kellogg’s all have unique brands that were created to serve the marketplace. There is a deliberate process that companies go through in order to create and brand themselves. They have to decide what is unique about themselves, who is their market and what is the sound of their voice (market message) to that market.

You have a brand as well. It is that unique brand that is specific to you and it is that unique brand that solves a specific problem in the world. It is God and you blended together and there is no one else on the entire planet that can do it quite like you. Out of the 6.6 Billion other people on this planet, you and you alone have something that no other person can offer. As I stated earlier, every person has a passion and every passion has value, and it is that value that creates opportunities.

Leadership happens when you take the value that is in you and use it to serve the world around you. If you discover your gift, refine and develop it, and then take that gift and serve your gift to the world, you become great! There is nothing wrong with the desire to be great, it is part of who we are and how God created us to be. The New Testament talks about this in the story of Jesus and His disciples. They had been traveling on the road and it became obvious that there was a dispute among the disciples. Later, when Jesus asked them about it, the scripture says that they became silent. It is interesting to note that not only did Jesus know what they were arguing about but He used it as an opportunity to give us one of our greatest lessons about what greatness is all about.

'Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road? But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, *"If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."* Mark 9:33-37

Notice, Jesus did not preach a sermon about humility; He did not tell them that the desire to be great was something to be loathed because it was a “work of the flesh.” Instead it tells us that he took a little child into His lap and he told them “how to become great”! He told them that the secret to greatness was to become like a child and serve others.

What is leadership? You are a leader when you are known for your unique gift and you are using that gift in serving the world around you. The amazing thing about it is that when this happens, you will discover that the world will beat a path to your door in order to drink from your well and quench the thirst inside. Remember, the value of your passion creates opportunities. This is the pathway to creating a successful business, a successful ministry, and a life’s journey that brings joy not only to yourself but to others around you. Your leadership and gift is different from your spouse’s, it is different from your children’s; it is unique only to you.

That value, that quest, that passion, that desire has a value. When the gift is realized and brought into the marketplace of humanity, people take notice, people see the value and they will come running. Do you want to make a living or have a job? Understand your gift, unwrap its intricacies, prepare it, massage it, hone it. Slice it open; discover the beauty and the savor of what’s inside and then, present it to the world and you will never have lack in your life again.

So leadership is taking your gift, that unique you, and serving it to the world. The disciples argued among themselves because they

wrongly thought that leadership was about position. Jesus told them that leadership was about service.

In the church we take the examples that Jesus gave us about serving and mess them up. Take for instance the time He washed the feet of His disciples. Do you remember the story? In the church I grew up in, we would follow the example that Jesus gave us and have foot washing services. Now there is nothing wrong with doing this in and of itself. It is a humbling and precious experience. But I believe we missed the real message for the most part. Was this what Jesus was telling us when he washed the feet of his disciples, that we were to make it a religious practice in our churches to wash each other's feet? Could there have possibly been a deeper meaning here?

Leadership is when we release and deploy the gift that is on the inside of us to the world! A minister friend of mine, Dave Duell, tells the story of when he was ministering in Mexico. The miraculous power of God was being demonstrated as people were being touched and healed. The crowds were stirred and began to press toward Dave in hopes of touching him. At first, Dave's immediate reaction was to pull away so that people would not be looking to him but to God. The Holy Spirit immediately reminded him of the story of the woman with the issue of blood. She believed that if she could only touch the edge of the garment of Jesus that she would be healed, and when she managed to get close enough to touch it, she indeed was healed. The Holy Spirit told Dave that they wanted to touch the garment of Jesus, and that he was the garment. Dave instantly responded and jumped into the crowd as he reached out in all directions with his arms so that as many people

as possible could touch him. As a result, hundreds witnessed the power of God in their lives that day!

I tell the story here because it serves as a reminder that people still want to touch the garment of Jesus, and you are His garment. People want to touch you, they want to touch the uniqueness that is on the inside of you, they want to touch it! We need to take our gifts out of the hidden places of our lives, the closets that have we have placed them in. We need to take the gifts that we have out of the church, the stained glass fish aquariums that we visit once a week, and take them to the world. This is where real ministry is to take place, in the marketplace of humanity, it is our city and in our world. Your leadership calling is found in taking that unique blend of who you are to the world.

Some people want to wait their entire lives to start preparing their gift. The problem with that is that if you wait your entire life to start, when you get there the gift won't be there. Others spend their lives in preparation but never take action beyond the preparation. The discovery of the value of our passion creates opportunities but if we don't apply action to the wisdom we have, opportunity will never find us. It may knock but we will not be able to hear its voice because we have not met it on the way.

If you feel like you are stuck in a box and you have nowhere to go, life seems to have placed restrictions on you and you think that you have no options left, the secret is to simply get in touch, rediscover that unique gift, that core authentic desire that is on the inside of you. If, after you discover it you feel paralyzed, that you are unable to take movement toward its fulfillment, simply start with what you have. You

may only be able to figuratively move your small finger because of the tight space of confinement, but move it any way. As you begin to exercise what seems to be the impossible, you will soon be surprised to discover that you are able to move your hand, your wrist and then your arm. Keep doing what you think you cannot do and soon you will be able to walk and then run.

Inspired Action Steps:

Identify what your uniqueness really is. What makes you different from those around you? Make a list of ways your gift can be used and allowed to shine. Make a list of individuals and groups of people who need the gift uniqueness that is in you. Select from this list of people and begin to serve these people over a 90 day period to test the results.

About The Author

Scott Johnson is the author of “Breaking They Cycle of Defeat” and “Toxic Beliefs About God That Keep You Weak”, he is a business leader, minister and speaker. Scott and his wife Debra have been coaching, assisting individuals and entrepreneurs for 25 years. Not only have they pastored with The Foursquare Church, but they have lived and continue to reach out to the Philippines. They are the founders of Grace Empowered Living Ministries whose focus is to teach people to think more clearly about themselves, their potential and purpose, to live effective lives through the grace of God. Scott and his wife travel and speak to audiences in the U.S. as well as many other countries.

God has given Scott a special ability to transcend and communicate across many of the barriers that keep people from understanding and experiencing what he calls "a livable Christianity" that is real and genuine. He publishes a weekly audio program by the name of www.52LifeLessons.com.

If you would like to schedule and have Scott speak to your group or next event, feel free to contact him at: Scott@GraceEmpoweredLiving.com

I have known Scott Johnson for nearly two decades... And have witnessed him ministering God's grace with concern and skill to congregations I have pastored on a number of occasions. I highly recommend his character and ministry without any reservation.

Pastor Don Stiltner
The Foursquare Church

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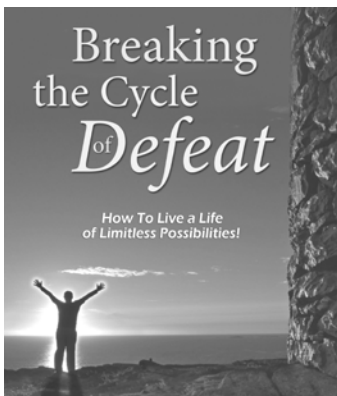
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Toxic Beliefs About God That Make You Weak

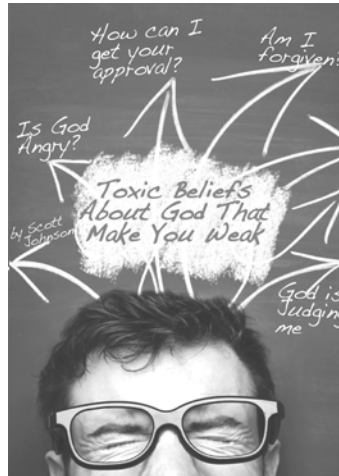
Foundation is everything! Everything that is built on a poor foundation becomes questionable and weak! The same stands true for your faith and understanding of God. It is not uncommon to hear things in church that sound right but in the end can cost us dearly if we embrace them.

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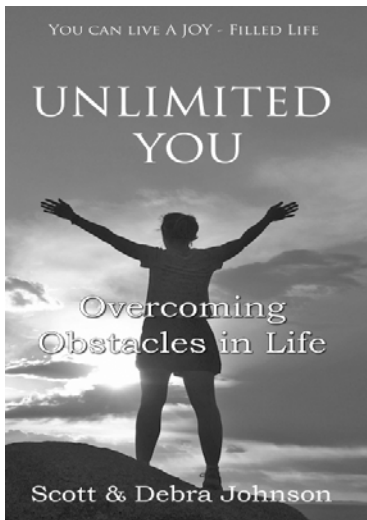
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