

# **Ready To Make A Difference?**

**Waking Up To a World That Needs You!**

Let your light so shine before men, that  
they may see your good works and glorify  
your Father in heaven.

Matt. 5:16

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# INTRODUCTION

As I sat in the classroom the instructor asked all her adult students to share their remarks about how they had answered each of the questions on the worksheet in front of them. The teacher's name was Becky and the class was about understanding your calling as a writer and how different events in our lives point or confirm our direction in life.

As I looked down through my blurred, tired eyes at my sheet, which was still blank, I thought to myself, "I hate filling out these things!"

It was obvious that the intent of the questions was to cause us to dig into our lives and find the common theme that would point us to understanding our purpose.

There I was, surrounded, in a class of all women, which made me wonder why I was even sitting there. It had been four intense days, sitting in a variety of classes on many different topics. I was tired and was ready to go home.

Okay, "Who's ready to share?", Becky asked.

'Question number one, "What did you love to play when you were little?'"

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The gal sitting farthest from me on the front row began. “I pretended to be a nurse,” she answered. The next person behind her answered, “I would gather the neighborhood children and get them to sit down while I pretended to be a teacher.” Different women one by one would lift their hands and share.

“Okay, what were some of your answers for the second question?” the teacher asked. I closed my eyes and wondered if I might be able to hold my head up and take a quick nap without being noticed.

“What have your parents said you are good at?” asked the teacher. And again, one by one, this group of ladies began to answer. Suddenly from behind me one blurted out, “My mom said I talked too much!” As she answered her eyes welled up with tears and she began to cry. Everyone turned to look at her, including me.

Becky the instructor immediately responded, “That is a lie! You were meant to be a speaker!” The ladies immediately gathered around and prayed for Karen.

“Yikes”, I thought. Maybe these simple little questions are important and maybe I should take this a little more seriously.

As I later reflected, I was amazed to realize how the little things that we experience while growing up can have such a powerful effect on our lives today as adults. They remain buried down deep, waiting for some future point when they will be triggered from their lodging place in our soul.

Most likely you are scanning through this material in hopes of finding an answer to life's greatest questions: questions about meaning and purpose and how your life could be different.

This is a search and a journey that most people have faced. It is a search for relevance, meaning, hope and change.

Your desire for a better future won't be resolved by doing the same old stuff you have tried in the past. Don't get me wrong, the self-help, "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" approach is good and it has had its place to get you where you are today. But when it comes down to it, it simply lacks the missing element that could change everything in a dramatic way.

This subject reminds me of the story of an event that took place many years ago in a farming community. The people who lived there enjoyed the plush fertile soil where they lived and grew crops of all kinds.

Families raised children that never lacked for anything. Everyone was happy and content.

As the years went by, the irrigation ditches began to slow down ever so slightly. No one really paid too much attention and just thought that it was just a fluke of nature.

Each year they received less and less water, which eventually began to cause the town elders great concern. Soon a meeting was called. "We need more moisture!" the townsmen cried! Mr. Breuer stood up and assured everyone there, "This is only temporary, but we do need to look at what we can do about it." Harper Jones became angry... "We cannot wait! We need to take action now!"

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It was decided that the group would be split up into three smaller groups and each was to research and try their method of choice. The first group decided to hire the local native Indians to perform a rain dance ceremony.

The second group paid for small rockets that once shot off would seed the clouds with silver iodide in hopes of creating rain.

The third group began a prayer vigil while they fasted. Months passed by and nothing changed. The sad fact of the matter was that things became worse.

The ditches that had brought the water year after year finally became completely dry and parched. The crops couldn't grow and food became hard to come by.

Oh, it would rain from time to time, but the community had always primarily relied on the ditches to bring water their fields and gardens.

Eventually, the families that had lived there for generations were forced to sell their land at less than favorable prices and move on. It was a very sad state of affairs, especially in light of all that they had tried to do.

The new owners of the land took possession and immediately began to wonder why the previous farming community had suffered as they had. Why, just 10 miles to the north there was plenty of water. In fact last year they had had a bumper crop that broke all records.



Their curiosity caused them to search the waterways that led to this farming community. Their search led them into an area that was a small forest of trees. As they continued to search they came upon a community of beavers who had blocked off the waterway and created a dam.

The answer to the problem that had caused so much pain and suffering had been discovered. It was a dam built by beavers that had created a bottleneck of water so that water past the dam barely trickled out.

I tell this story to make an important point. We spend an enormous amount of time searching out the reason for our existence and our personal purpose. Many books have explored these ideas. We even have special tests that try to give us hints, Myers Briggs, the Disc assessment and others. Maybe you have taken one of those spiritual gifting tests at your local church. The intent of those tests is to help you find your place to serve within the four walls of what I call the “stained glass fish aquarium.” The problem is that the spiritual gifting tests don’t address how you can make a difference out in the real world.

Many of us are much like the farmers who searched for ways they could solve their dilemma but never thought for one moment that the solution was upstream.

I must admit, it is fun to take those tests in order to find out about yourself and I have used them from time to time. I even became a certified temperament counselor at one time.

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The problem is, we lack God's view and opinion as to how He sees us. Because we are without a clear vision, a bottleneck has been created. Rather than spend time and energy in searching and looking for clues, lets go right to the source of the problem, what keeps us stuck.

### **Simple Questions That Make You Go Hmmm**

Why is it that a tree knows its purpose and we don't?

Why is it that a bird never has to take flying lessons?

Why do fish know to swim in a school without attending one?

The answer is, that it is in their DNA! They were all created or born with their identity imprinted and intact and with their genetic code in place.

Karen, the woman who sat behind me in class and cried, had carried a hurt for years because of what her mother said to her. No amount of personality quizzes would remedy the real issue. No amount of concerned prayer, hugs, and concern from those around her would stop the pain. Please don't misunderstand me, there is real comfort in knowing that others care for you. But, we are looking for real solutions that will bring water to the dry parched land of our souls.

This book is not your ordinary book. it will radically change the course of your life if you will embrace its contents and step into the way you were designed and meant to live. The solution to our problem is found in simply going back to our own identity as God intended.

The log in the water that has become a dam will be removed and you will begin to experience the unforced rhythms of God's grace in your life through everything you do and touch.

Identifying the log and removing it from our lives starts by stepping out of our own view and opinion and fully embracing what God says and believes about us.

Let me make you a promise: this book if applied will provide you with the knowledge and tools that will stop the control of the disempowering voices and negatives in your life that have kept you stuck and have stopped you from moving forward.

The truth is, you're not alone! This same familiar soundtrack of disempowerment plays in the backdrop of everyone's mind. For most, it is ignored and often drowned out by the noise of life itself.

We convince ourselves that this is just the way it is, that there is nothing beyond this moment of experience. Our minds become clouded and deaf to all other possibilities and then we simply embrace what we are experiencing and then allow ourselves to become defined by them.

Pretend, pretend, breath, stay in your lane, breath...

**Believe me when I tell you, this is not how it is supposed to be.**

As humans, we have fallen upon our own sword by ignoring the fact that we were made in the image of God. Genius poured genius into an earthen vessel.

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It was an out-of-the-box demonstration that shook and marveled the angels. You and I are part of a grand experiment that provides you with a path toward relevance and meaning.

Welcome to planet Earth. Now, let's get busy.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Your Difference Can Make a Difference

As we walked up to the front of the church there hung a big sign above the front door. It read,

**Incubation Center, Releasing Gods Potential in You!**

Wow, that is certainly different. I commented to Debra, have you ever seen anything like that before? She had seen it too, nodded yes, but became distracted by the two people standing inside the door greeting people as they walked in.

They seemed friendly enough. As we approached, one of them stretched out his hand to me and greeted me with a big smile and said, "Hi I am Charles, thank you for coming today!" I shook Charles' hand, smiled back and answered, "Glad to be here." Charles looked to be about 38, wore a pair of Dockers and a short sleeve dress shirt that hung outside his pants. He and the other greeter were both wearing a button that read, "You Are God's Gift to the World."

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We must have had that “deer in the headlights” look, because the next thing Charles said was, “Is this your first time here?”

We affirmed that it was, and he handed us a special visitor card and told us to fill it out to receive a gift. “Just drop it in the offering plate when it comes by during the service.”, Charles said with a smile.

Debra and I both grew up in traditional Christian homes. Debra’s family went to a Pentecostal Holiness church and I grew up in an Assembly of God church led by Marilyn and Wally Hickey. As we grew up, we both witnessed the traditional mindsets of the church become challenged with the younger generation.

The early ’70s were marked by an influx of new music from groups like Maranatha, 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Acts, Larry Norman, and Barry McGuire. The younger generation wanted contemporary music, while the older claimed anything with a beat was of the devil.

Marilyn Hickey was breaking old traditions too. As the Catholic Church began to embrace the Charismatic movement she found many open doors and went from teaching in small home groups filled with eager Catholics to speaking in large conferences.

Some Churches accepted the new and compromised by singing a mixture of traditional music and contemporary, while others resisted. In the end, those who embraced the new grew, while churches like the one Debra grew up in struggled with shrinking numbers.

What we were about to experience that morning was anything but traditional. Our old worn out concepts about what church was supposed to look like was about to be stretched and challenged in new ways that we had never thought possible.

As we entered the auditorium that morning to find a seat, we knew that we were in for a surprise. We had been told that this church was different and was breaking new ground where it concerned being a relevant voice to this generation.

This excited both of us because over the years we had watched many churches lose their ability to release members into a relevant expression of their faith, or what I call their voice and gifting. Instead, churches all too often became self-focused in attracting congregations to a pulpit-centered service rather than focused on helping people step into the full expression of God in their world.

What do I mean when I use the term “Your Voice?”

We must recognize that every person on this planet was born to live a life that flows completely unhindered without reservation or hesitation. This voice is the way that God chooses to express Himself to the world through your uniqueness. It is powerful when released and expressed through your life and brings personal fulfillment.

Picture a flowing river that is near where you live. It is constant, it never stops as it makes its way to its destination. Now imagine yourself holding a glass of water and pouring it into the river. Now let me ask you, where is that water you poured and what is it now a part of? The answer is obvious, it is now a part of the river.

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My second question: is there a way you can separate the water from the river? The answer is obviously “No,” and that is because the river and your water are now one. Jesus spoke of this in His prayer to the Father.

“I pray for them all to be joined together as one even as you and I, Father, are joined together as one. I pray for them to become one with us so that the world will recognize that you sent me.

For the very glory you have given to me I have given them so that they will be joined together as one.” (John 17: 21-22 TPT)

This is God’s voice in you in complete harmony with your voice and passion and life. By now, I am sure you are asking if that is even possible. Let me assure you that if Jesus Himself prayed this prayer then indeed it is possible! But there are some things that can short-circuit your voice and stop you from expressing what is already yours.

But before I tell you, let me finish my story about what took place at this church we were visiting for the first time.

That morning the minister shared the words of Jesus when he talked about being salt and light to the world. He read out of the book of Matthew from the Message version of the Bible:

The preacher read; “Let me tell you why you are here. “You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors to the earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.”



After reflecting on the passage for a minute, he continued reading. “Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:13-16 (MSG)

The point of the message that morning was that salt has a purpose the same as light has a purpose. We were individually set on this earth to display our unique “God flavor” and “God color” to others. The preacher went on to say that humanity has lost the true strength and quality of its saltiness because they are disconnected from God, out of harmony, as it were.

This was the purpose of Jesus, to realign and bring humanity back to what was lost, our true blueprint and identity. He went on to say that we now have the opportunity to be the forerunners in this glorious new lifestyle!

I looked over at my wife Debra with excitement in my eyes, I could hardly believe what my ears were hearing. This was a message that had been in our hearts for years. We have always had a desire to make a difference with our lives and that was one reason we had come to check out this new church.

It is an important lesson to learn, to know that God created all of creation to shine His life in this world, not to be hidden in some

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obscure corner never to be seen or heard. You, my friend, have Purpose and this means that you matter!

Look around you and you will see that everything has purpose and design. All creation speaks of intention, growth, and fulfillment.

“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,”  
Rom. 1:20

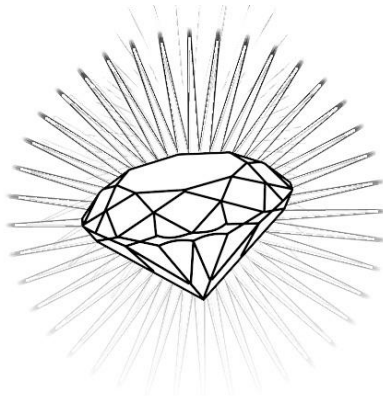
The Christian life is unlike any religion in the world. Its foundational message is that God’s desire is for each of us to live out our lives full of purpose, vibrancy, and fulfillment.

God’s desire is that our lives mirror His image and character on Earth. Our purpose is to reflect and give voice to the excellencies of God.

This is what 1 Peter 1:9 means when it says that we are to show forth the “praises” of God who has called us to glory and virtue.

The word praises can be illustrated by a diamond reflecting the light that is shining onto it. Once the light hits it you see the various colors that are held within it. Blue, red, green and yellow all reflect God to the world around you in unique ways.

Your potential only remains a potential until you connect with the source. God desires to shine his light to all and through all, but it must be discerned and embraced.



This means that God has not only loved you from the beginning but has set you apart to represent Him. Your uniqueness sets you apart from every other human on the earth and makes you distinct and special.

**It is God’s desire to flow through you into the world unhindered and unrestrained. It is Gods image in you, the God of more than enough whose supreme desire is to continually expand Himself through you, His creation.**

“For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was aware and loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness], that He might become the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom. 8:29 Amp.)

This mutual influence and affinity of all things assures us that all things have a purpose.

The major problem is that we have become very accustomed to living in a way that is opposite to how God created us to live.

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As I sat there that morning listening to the message about what it meant to be salt and light I wondered if the church would ever discover its true meaning beyond the traditions with which we have become familiar.

After years of being in the ministry, our perceptions and understanding had taken on a whole new meaning from what we had first understood when we started out as a young couple. Our expectations were based on many wrong assumptions and that brought us devastating results in our own lives.

And we were not the only ones, many of our Christian friends through the years had lost faith, not in God but the church. To them, the church had lost its meaning and relevance in their lives because it did not speak to their real-life issues.

What we were hearing that morning was an explosion of truth that would surely have a significant impact on the lives of many people.

The pastor finished his message that morning with this verse out of “The Message” paraphrase of the Bible.

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. 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.” (Matt. 11:28-30 MESS)

His final words were a challenge to everyone there to move out of religion and into relationship, where life and true meaning are to be discovered. Only in relationship with God are we inspired to live the life of our true design as it was meant to be lived!

As we left the church that morning we walked by the information booth and picked up a few brochures and flyers in order to learn more about the church.

On the top of one of the flyers were the words, “Are You Singing the Song You Were Born to Sing?” This looks interesting. As I handed it to Debra she snatched it out of my hand as we walked out and began to read it out loud.

“All creation was created for a purpose and naturally comes with the inherent design and ability to fulfill that purpose. Come to our free class and discover your inherent design and purpose.”

Debra paused and thought for a moment and said, “You know, it’s true, take birds for instance; they never attend flight school in order to learn to fly. In the end, God desires each of us to simply discover and live out our design!”

I responded, “Wow, that’s pretty profound Debra. If that is true, and I’m not saying it’s not, why do we need classes, books or teachers to show us the way? We all have what it takes; we each have the raw material, capacity and capability to accomplish incredible things on this Earth.”

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I started to chuckle as I finished my statement with the question, “Why then do we have to have flight schools and birds don’t?” Debra rolled her eyes at me and said, “Well, why don’t you ask that pastor?”

“Maybe I will Debra, maybe I will...”

To us, the idea of what Christian living looked like had significantly changed over the years. It was no longer something only to be experienced inside the walls of a building on Sunday morning, but outside where people are living their day to day lives.

In fact, in all our previous years of experience, we had never seen a pastor take on the role of a coach and assist their members in the process of discovering their specific call and voice to the world around them. The rule seemed to be that if there was to be any encouragement it must always fit within the context of traditional evangelism approaches rather than simply building a life filled with purpose and passion that touched all areas of life’s expression.

We had discovered that when a person discovers their own passion and purpose, life becomes an exciting and thrilling experience. It isn’t to just be contained within the four walls of a church building on a Sunday morning, but instead, it is to be a life that exemplifies our own personal blueprint on a daily basis. It is a life that, without words, invites others to take the ride of a lifetime and participate by discovering their own purpose and blueprint as well.

In the kingdom, everything is actually spiritual. No longer are we to live a compartmentalized life.

Sunday only kingdom living is a oxymoron to the true definition of what a life in Christ looks like.

There is no longer secular and spiritual kingdom living, there is only kingdom living that invades every aspect of our lives.

This includes your business, your marriage, the relationships around you as well as your place of employment if you work for someone else.

We are not to live a dualistic life-style where everything is compartmentalized. We carry the kingdom everywhere we go and as a result effect the atmosphere in a positive manner. Our lives flow from our own individual difference and voice.

## REFLECTIONS

1. What areas of your life give you your greatest joy and personal satisfaction?
2. What is God's purpose and desire for His creation?
3. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, to learn the unforced rhythms of grace.
4. If we have the capacity and capability to live our purpose and design, what is it that stops us?



# CHAPTER TWO

## Chains of Our False Beliefs

As I sat in the half darkness of the van, I squinted out the windshield and watched the rain slowly fall from the sky. The sounds of the pitter patter of little droplets hitting the metal shell of the van made the day feel even more dismal. The sky had turned everything dark and dreary, including my soul.

As I sat there I cursed my life. I felt broken and aimless. It was Christmas of 1992, five years after that church visit and after our return from the Philippines. I was unemployed and frustrated. Our four children and my wife were at home waiting for me to bring food and Christmas presents. The problem was, I had no money.

As I sat there in the rain, I contemplated stepping out on the corner of Watt and Folsom Blvd. intersection in Sacramento, where we lived at the time, to beg for money from the cars passing by.

How could I of all people end up in a place like this?

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Were we not as the scripture says, a CHOSEN PEOPLE, a ROYAL priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession?

Instead, I felt completely abandoned by God.

I thought back to the utter disappoint that we experienced in the midst of our greatest moments while serving in the Philippines.

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Growing up, I had always had a strong creative imagination and truly believed that nothing was impossible. With enough thought put toward a problem or issue, I know that I could come up with an answer. That creativity worked in all kinds of ways, both good and bad.

My mind was always packed full of ideas for possible ways to create money. At 8 years old I was placing ads in the local paper which sold a grapefruit diet plan I had found on my mother's dresser. The ad read, "Lose, 10 pounds in 10 days, send \$1.00 and self-stamped envelope." At age 17 I opened a Bible bookstore that I later sold.

This was part of my gifting from God, but it was that same gift that could get me into situations that were less than honorable. For instance, figuring out how to skip classes without triggering the attention of teachers and school administrators. Another time, I had the idea to fill the three-story fountain that was in the local indoor shopping center with bubble bath.

My brother and I “borrowed” bubble bath soap from a local grocery store and slipped it into the water’s edge using our Orange Julius cups. We then stood back from a safe distance to watch all the action.

Bubbles everywhere! The police and fire department showed up racing around like a bunch of keystone cops slipping and sliding to the ground. It was one of those epic moments in life that even now when I publicly tell the story, people come up to me later saying, I remember reading that in the paper, that was you?

Years later, after getting married, my wife saved me from my mischievous mind, but as a young husband my ideas continued to flow to find ways to make ends meet. I came up with the idea to buy a battery operated drill and boxes of front-door “peepholes.” We would go door to door selling “peepholes” to people. Our pitch was simple: “We can install one in 5 minutes for just \$15.00.”

Life wasn’t always easy, I struggled like many against the voice that made me question my own ability to succeed. Our parents do the best they know how, and for the most part they rely on how they themselves were raised. We as children get caught up in that mixture of both the good and the bad.

I was raised in a traditional Christian home that created some mixed messages about my own personal worth and how things were supposed to work. My entrepreneurial mind seemed to always be full of ideas that somehow conflicted with what I had heard growing up in church.

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I felt a strong calling to be a minister, but my ideas about what being a minister looked like did not fit the entrepreneurial part of me.

When I looked at scripture it labeled ministry callings as:

1. Apostle
2. Prophet
3. Evangelist
4. Pastor
5. Teacher

Nowhere in that list did I see serial entrepreneur. I could not reconcile the high level of creative ideas that continually poured into my head with pursuing ministry. What I later discovered was that my beliefs about how these ministry gifts were to operate and function were bound by the traditional beliefs we had been taught about how these ministry gifts operated.

As strange as it seems, the pull I felt to create new business ideas and the pull toward ministry seemed to bring me into some type of inner conflict. One represented the secular, the other ministry, and the two of these would always be at war with one another.

As newlyweds, Debra and I had a desire to make a difference with our lives and decided to enter into the ministry. Going to Bible School seemed to be the best way to do that. After all wouldn't that be defined as the "more spiritual" and "godly" thing to do?

As life progressed I discovered that my own inner gifts and creativity would find ways to shine no matter the environment I was placed in.

Certainly, making a difference in people's lives was meaningful and fulfilling. My wife Debra and I ended up as pastors and later traveled to live and serve in another country as missionaries.

As I have said, my difference made me a visionary. I was a pioneer, a forerunner, but at times it seemed like I was stuck in a barnyard full of chickens who couldn't see past the door of their chicken coop.

The problem is, that kind of thinking normally conflicts with "How things are supposed to be." and often is misunderstood. Little did I realize that it was all part of the DNA of God's voice in my life. I was made to be a trailblazer to break open new ground and territories for what God desires to reveal to the body of Christ.

The problem was, as is common to many of us, that I didn't understand my own self and how God wanted to use me.

It took us at least five years to make this dream of ministry and reaching out to the nations come true, from 1978- 1983. But to look at it honestly, our preparation started many years prior, as children growing up in church.

My wife Debra remembers the time she attended a children's event when she was ten years old.

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A large tent had been erected at the campground, and there she heard the words of a missionary sharing all that was in her heart about wanting to make a difference in Africa.

That day Debra responded to an invitation to join her heart with God's heart and go to the mission fields of the world.

Suddenly, in an instant, she saw a vision of herself standing before the faces of thousands of Chinese, young and old, with tears flowing freely from their eyes and hands raised to heaven.

Years later our destination as missionaries was to be the Philippine Islands, where we were eventually sent to take over a church and raise up a Bible school in Mindanao, an area known for containing an extremist militant army called the NPA.

We immediately began to see results from our work. Souls were saved, healings and other miracles happened that would boggle the mind if I were to tell you. We later wrote teaching and training materials that were distributed to over 100,000 people.

God met us time and time again during this time. But if you knew me you would know that my brain was constantly ticking with business ideas and ways make money, especially when our support from the United States began to dwindle and eventually we were forced to return.

Looking back, it is amazing to me how God's provision and kindness has been demonstrated to us all these years as He patiently waited for us to find and step into our unique voice, calling and purpose.

Sitting in that van on that drizzly day in Sacramento had me asking questions about God and His provision for our lives. Little did I realize it at that dark moment. God did meet us in our hour of need by sending people to our door to help us through that Christmas.

One person who had no idea of our dilemma showed up with groceries and said God told him to come by. Others who we knew brought presents for our children. God met our immediate needs.

Up to that moment, we had assumed that we had done everything right. We had prayed, studied, seemly pushed all the right buttons and pulled all the right levers. Everything we had learned had prepared us for accomplishing God's call for our lives, or at least that is what we had thought.

It wasn't until some time later that I began to closely examine some of the beliefs I had about myself and the way I understood the Gospel, and even more importantly, how it applied to me personally.

Throughout the following years, we continued to minister and serve where we could find opportunity, while at the same time we started and tried our hand at various ways of creating money.

To be honest we bounced back and forth from business to ministry, ministry to business. When we focused on ministering our finances would dry up, so then we would focus on making money, but our hearts would tell us, you need to be focusing on getting back to the mission field.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

I wondered how Paul the Apostle was able to be both a minister of God's Grace while at the same time doing business as a tent maker.

There always seemed to be a conflict because of the need to focus on one thing in order to be successful. Paul obviously had a revelation of what ministry looked like for his day.

One thing was for sure, we were in need of this same revelation for ourselves, and until we had clarity in this area we would never sustain increase and blessing when it came into our hands.

There were times where I would, with one simple idea, create within forty-five days a monthly six-figure income but then somehow it would slip out of our hands and we would be back in a financial struggle.

There were plenty of things we could point outside of ourselves for the reasons, but I never stopped to consider the conflict within my own heart.

We each deal with many types of conflicts that get in the way of living life the way it is meant to be lived. Certainly, what I experienced held me back for many years.

There is no way we can possibly know the cost of not stepping into and experiencing the fullness of what could have been ours. Like our parents, for good or bad, we each walk in the knowledge we currently have.



The one redeeming factor is the promise that God works all things out to our benefit. He takes every possible mistake and choice and produces fruit. A magnificent beautiful harvest is still ours to be had and enjoyed.

Perhaps there are areas in your own life where you have not been able to identify the reasons that you do not experience the breakthrough you desire. It might be in your relationships, marriage, or children. Maybe it is financial or health-related.

There can be many conflicts in our lives that we may not even be aware. These conflicts stop us from living and experiencing the greater life.

What you are about to discover is the key that unlocks all those chains of beliefs that have stopped you from finding and fulfilling your call and purpose. Inner conflicts of beliefs are what stops us from living the life of our design. God's view and opinion is the ultimate answer to our relief.

How you view God, how you view yourself can create stoppages in our own lives. Instead of simply accepting things as they are let's examine the truth.

The turning point is in this book. It is what set me free from many of the things that were stopping me from moving forward. This same epiphany can be yours as well.

## REFLECTIONS

1. If the end result of our beliefs are based on the source where should our focus be?
  
2. What is the source from which most people find satisfaction where it concerns identity, significance and worth?
  
3. Read the story of the woman at the well in John 4:1-47.
  - a. What this woman's identity, significance worth came from?
  
  - b. What do you think Jesus was referring to when He spoke of the water he provides?
  
  - c. What thirst would be satisfied if she drank from this water?

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **You Have Been Lied to, But It's Not Your Fault**

Waking up to truth... That is what happened to me. God is speaking to us all the time. This is the promise of the Holy Spirit, to lead us into all truth. The truth of what? The truth of what is already ours in Christ Jesus.

We have become very adept at falling for the lies that surround us concerning happiness, freedom and inner peace. I call it living in the “There Zone”.

“I’ll be happy when...”

“I will be successful when...”

“I will be secure and better off when...”

“I will have the perfect marriage when...”

The “when” for us can be just about anything. It can represent other relationships around us. For instance, “when” I connect to the right community, find the right partner, or even when a family member changes. It can be connected to an event or accomplishment. “When” I reach this goal, I will finally find worth and meaning.

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

Possessions and ownership can also be something we connect to our feelings of happiness and personal value. It might be a car, a home, or the size of our bank account.

The lies that fill our heads are common ones. All of these things are dependent on an outside world that will surely disappoint us. Like a Bedouin who is content to eke out a meager existence in the desert for their entire lives and simply suck water from the ground and rocks around them, we too are caught in the wastelands of our lives in search of the answer to our hearts' cry.

The truth of it is that it is really not your fault.

### **Living right side up in an upside down world**

The problem is that you have been lied to for your entire life. A trap, as it were, was set long ago that has had its grip around the hearts and souls of humanity. This subtle lie is very persuasive and keeps us from living the life we really want and deserve, the life God planned for us and designed us to live.

Living right side up in an upside down world is what God gives us through the finished work that was accomplished through Jesus Christ. We just don't understand what this means in its entirety yet.

True value, worth, and significance do not rely upon what our world considers common. In Matthew 6, Jesus tells us to not worry or build our lives based upon a list of external things that most would think is worthy of great concern.

What you will eat,  
What you will drink,  
Your body and what you will put on it.

The question is asked, “is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Let me put this before you: perhaps the words of Jesus spoken to his disciples that day dealt with the very issue of life itself.

Perhaps there was a much deeper truth to what he described as clothing. Possibly the word “clothing” represented not just the cloth that covers our bodies but also the outside world from which, we have been convinced, meaning, relevance, and purpose come. The covering that we seek in our lives is a false covering that will never satisfy our real cravings.

I have a question to ask you. At what point does the Word say that “All things will be added to you?” When does provision for our lives take place? The answer is simple but profound when you see it.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matt. 6:23 NKJV)

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

The Kingdom, in the context of what we are talking about, has everything to do with the source of your meaning, relevance, and purpose.

What are you searching for and where are the answers? What are the chains of belief about what is possible and what is not possible for you?

## **Get Back in Your Box**

I am reminded of the story of a young family who lived in Norway. Their two-year-old son, Gunder, contracted polio at the age of 2. His legs became shriveled and non-functional. His parents placed him in a box and pulled him around with a rope that was tied to it. As he grew, his parents put wooden ski runners onto the box to pull him through the snow, and in the summers would put wheels on it.

For years, he would hear others say that he would never walk. Whispers from visitors talking to his parents said that he would never be able to have anything or do anything useful. He would never amount to much and would most likely die an early death.

Can you imagine what it must have been like for him? Perhaps you heard similar things as you grew up. As children, we interpret our world the best that we can. Events take place that most probably had nothing to do with us, yet they affect our self-image even years later.

One day, as Gunder at age 7 sat in his box watching as healthy children around him play, he glanced into the mirror and saw a new and different picture of himself. Instead of seeing a crippled little boy with withering legs, he saw himself standing strong as normal as could be. Instead of seeing himself trapped he saw himself as normal.

This new image of himself changed everything. From that day forward he was filled with a new vision of himself walking. His new mission was to get out of that box, and so he would rock back and forth until it would fall over. His parents would become angry and tell him, “Get back in the box.” “Stop that rocking.” But once they would leave the room he would continue rocking until he would fall out again. Eventually, his parents grew tired of arguing and allowed him to crawl across the floor with his legs dragging behind him.

Little Gunder refused to give up on the vision he had had of himself walking. It never left. He eventually was able to pull himself up to the side of a table and stand upright. The thing he had been told he would never do became a reality as he learned how to walk. Gunder Birkland outlived all those who said his life would be cut short. He became one of the 10 wealthiest men in Seattle, Washington at that time. He married and had several children, one of whom became a minister.

### **Wheelchairs and Boxes, They’re all the Same**

Challenges present themselves in different ways. For some people, it might be financial issues; for others, health-related issues; or for some, it could mean not having meaningful relationships. For some, it’s a lack of meaning and purpose.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

While attending a seminar several years ago at a local hotel I remember walking through the hallway toward the registration table. I noticed that the man running the registration table and handing out nametags was sitting in a wheelchair.

As I started to walk toward the table, the Lord spoke to me and I saw myself approaching the man and tapping 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 tapped with my foot 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, without a moment’s hesitation, I knew that this mission I was on was not about the man in front of me.



It had been orchestrated by God and I was the one who was about to get a lesson for that day. As I walked away, I was shaken as I thought out the full meaning of what I had just experienced.

It made a huge emotional impact on my life. It revealed to me just how conditioned I had become by my personal wheelchair and brought me to an entirely new way of looking at the problems and issues of life that we accept as our “normal”.

My own inner conflicts had sabotaged me and blocked me from experiencing greater financial breakthrough as well as ministry impact. I realized that if there was to ever be change and sustainable results in my life, I would have to accept personal responsibility for where I was. I could no longer blame people, past issues, or bad experiences for my staying in my wheelchair. I could not blame bad karma or even God. I had to accept the fact that my struggle was about what I believed about me!

I'll never forget that experience as I determined to walk out of that wheelchair, lift it over my head and thrust it through the glass ceiling of false beliefs.

Each of us has an inner blueprint of beliefs, but most people are not aware of theirs because they have been sitting in their wheelchair for so long that it has become a part of their lives. We tell ourselves, “This is just the way I am”, or “I can't hope to ever experience any more than what I am right now.”

In truth these people are correct. What they are really saying is, “I can't hope to ever experience more than my present conditioning. I am a prisoner in this wheelchair.” But the biggest problem is the fact that we are not even aware of the wheelchair we are in.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

What this meant to me was that I had to question everything that I believed about myself at a heart level.

I had to let go of deep-seated beliefs that had started even while I was a young person and exchange them with God's truth about who I was and of what I was capable.

Beliefs about my own worthiness and issues of God's plan and purpose for me, ideas about business and ministry, beliefs about where happiness, freedom, provision were to be found needed to be corrected.

As I began to exchange these old beliefs for new ones about myself I was able to confront them with the truth. I no longer saw the wheelchair as a part of who I was and I learned how to "let go" about how I felt about myself, money and my world around me. I began to experience a complete paradigm shift in my thinking, and as a result Debra and I have seen incredible breakthrough and are experiencing incredible results.

I have since written and published seven books, one of which was an Amazon bestseller. Each of these books speaks directly to the issues of how to break free of the limitations in our lives. I was able to start a business that generated a monthly six-figure income within a forty-five day period. I was later able to repeat this with two other online businesses.

We have traveled and have ministered to leaders in different countries and as a result now receive invitations to travel abroad and speak. We have been to England, Kenya, and Uganda have had a lot of impact in the Philippines as well. Our message right now reaches thousands of people around the world through the Internet. We are now seeing the finances to accomplish many of our goals manifest in our lives.

## REFLECTIONS

1. What are the lies we have been told about where relevance and purpose comes from?
2. Is having a true understanding about how God sees you an important one?
3. Would you say there is a wheelchair in your life that you have accepted as normal? What are they?

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Moving From the “There Zone” to the “Now Zone”

The goal of our ministry now is to help people move from The “There Zone” to the God lives here “Now Zone” which is where faith lives.

The results that people are experiencing are freedom in relationships, finance, health, clarity, purpose, and impact. We are making shifts in people’s lives which result in moving them from being what we call a functional person to becoming a vital person.

The “There Zone” is what Satan used in the garden to tempt Adam and Eve. He told them, “In the day that you eat it, your eyes will be opened.” In a real sense, he was telling them that they had lack and were missing something in their lives, that they needed something other than God’s provision in order for them to live.

It is interesting to note that indeed their eyes were opened that day, but instead of satisfaction and feelings of being complete, what they saw was even more lack. The Bible tells us that they saw that they were naked.

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

The nakedness they saw on that day went beyond the lack of physical clothing, it affected every area of their belief system.

The first they did then was to reach for a fig leaf to cover themselves.

“I’ll be covered when I put this fig leaf on.”

We know the fig leaf didn’t work because the very next thing they did was to hide from God in the garden. The Lord asked them, “Why didn’t you answer me when I called?” Adam’s answer was, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” They still felt naked! The “fig leaf” never provides what it promises.

The lie was: “The provision for my life is somewhere outside of myself.” Three thousand years later Jesus tells us that the answers to our greatest dilemma are not outside of ourselves, but provision is on the inside of us because that is where the King and His Kingdom reside.

### **Living Right Side Up in an Upside Down World**

Daniel Priestley writes in his book, “Key Person of Influence” about the difference between what he calls a functional person and a vital person. In very practical terms he outlines the differences.

As he puts it, a functional person is someone who might be good at what they do but in the end, are replaceable. A vital person is irreplaceable because they bring something to the table that a functional person cannot.

It is important to note the definition he points out about the word vital. The word vital has two definitions. One definition means “irreplaceable” and the other means “life-force.”

I take this a step further and look at it from the perspective of God’s nature in us and His desire manifest Himself in us to our world. (Romans 8:29 TPT)

Functional people are driven from the outside-in throughout their entire lives, which is a really dysfunctional way of living. God’s intention for us is that we discover the truth that we have been transformed, redeemed and are now are a life-giving force in our world.

What does this process look like?

## **Dysfunctional Living**

Where we all start out in our adult lives we live in the world in which we have grown up, where we look outside ourselves for relevance and identity. It is the “There Zone,” which means our existence is lived out on a “Hamster wheel.” We naively follow the path that has existed for thousands of years without realizing that we were meant for something more.

We will be later looking to what psychologist Abraham Maslow described as the “hierarchy of needs” and live our lives out climbing the mountain of humanism in a vain effort to become complete and self-actualized.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

I've written extensively about how we are driven from within by the unmet needs in our lives. Needs for love, acceptance, approval, happiness and peace and accepted as "This is just the way it is."

Continuing to live your life accepting that your relevance and identity come from your outside world has its consequences. You become subject to the shifting winds of a world that is always changing, never constant.



## Functional Living

This is what I call the "discovery phase" for a new believer. The Apostle Paul described these people "As newborn babes" (I Peter 2:2).



At the moment of our re-birth we are reborn and are full partakers of God's provision of what was accomplished for us through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

What has been provided to us is a completed work. In other words, everything you seek has already been made available to you. There is no begging God required and no performance, i.e. trying to get God to approve or do something for us that has already been provided.

But again, we are in the discovery phase, in other words, discovering what is already ours. A functional person is in transition concerning their understanding and revelation of what has already taken place.

This is where conflicts regarding past beliefs about a person's own identity, provision and reliance are challenged. Getting the right message is paramount.

There are many churches that mean well but can stifle the growth of a believer. They either never go beyond preaching salvation and forgiveness or they fall into the trap of performance rather than faith. I've addressed some of this in my book "Shattering Toxic Beliefs About God – Discovering God's Love For You."

Become established in the truth of God's view and opinion for your life and you will discover how to live life in the kingdom. Romans 12: 2 is a powerful verse of instruction. It speaks about the importance of renewing our minds to the truth. How we see God and knowing how God views us, sets us free to how we see ourselves!

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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“Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think.

This will empower you to discern God’s will as you live a beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes.”

Romans 12:2 (TPT)

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## Vital Living

The good news is that you are already a Vital Person, you just don’t know it yet! And most probably you are already experiencing results in your own life as a vital person in a lot of different ways.

The goal of this book is to inspire you to step into your own voice for your life, to realize that God is a God of expansion and growth and desires this same things in your life. He desires to take you on the ride of a lifetime and to help you learn what it means to experience the rhythms of grace!



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“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. 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.” (Matt. 11:28-30)

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What is a vital person? It is someone who has tapped into their God given voice. It is the place you feel most inspired to serve and make a difference.

Here is some other good news for you, it doesn’t have to look spiritual or religious to be of God. I realize this conflicts with what you have heard or been taught, but let me explain or you might wonder how is that going to touch someone’s life.

Most people who are Christians think that in order to be effective or to have an impact it must look a certain way. Years ago we were advised to pass out tracts and Christian material or to go door to door. It amazes me when I hear Christians tell me that in order to make a difference they need to volunteer at a food bank or volunteer at another charity.

I mean, don’t get me wrong, God uses all of those things and there is fruit that comes from it.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

But what I am talking about is not a once in a while expression of your faith and service. I am describing an all-out life expression that shows through every aspect of your life.

Look at any tree and you will find that if it is healthy and growing it is expressing itself to the world God's glory. That is what Romans 1:20 tells us about all of creation.

“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”

To this day, I've never seen a tree with a gospel tract, The Four Spiritual Laws, for example, hanging from its branches nor have my ears heard the gospel preached by the stars at night. Yet, I know that they are continually speaking of God and His goodness.

- A vital person lives to make a huge difference in the lives of those they serve through their unique gifts, talents, and abilities.
- These are all infused and connected to the power of the Holy Spirit to make deep connections with people.
- A vital person has moved past the old hymn, “This little light of mine” and instead now sees themselves as a lighthouse of light and life to those around them.

- A vital person understands they are indeed an irreplaceable life-force in the places they serve, a project, business, industry or cause.
- A vital person understands that the word serve is the key word because in serving they are defining true leadership.
- A vital person is a person who provides value to those they serve.
- A vital person understands the term “highest and best land use” when evaluating their own life’s purpose and activities.
- A vital person sees and understands the end from the beginning.
- A vital person focuses on being a giver more than a taker.
- A vital person focuses on being a producer instead of a consumer.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

### REFLECTIONS

1. What is the difference between living in the now zone and the there zone and how does one effect how you live your life?
2. Does God's word support living in the now zone? Give an example.
3. What is the difference between a functional person and someone who is vital?
4. Explain how Jesus was a vital person and what that means for you?

# CHAPTER FIVE

## The Law of Cause and Effect

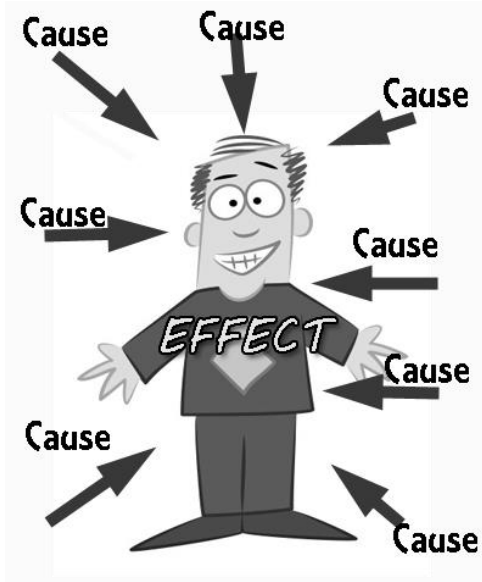
Cause and effect, these are the two great laws in our world today that govern just about everything we touch and see. It is the universal law of cause and effect that says that for every effect there is a definite cause and likewise for every cause, there is a definite effect. This is especially true about how you and I see ourselves. The way a person views their outside world is determined by whether that person sees the world outside of themselves as being the cause for what they are experiencing in their lives, or not.

An example would be the person who sees themselves having the power to effect change where ever they go. They are and see themselves as an Agent of change who operates in their specific voice to change the atmosphere wherever they are by their specific areas of anointing, gifts, past experiences and talents.

This person thrives in their element like a fish takes to water, but if placed on the shore they are powerless. The opposite is true for the person who blames everything and everyone else for their problems in life.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

We all are at one time or another caught in the lie and trap of our past dysfunctional lives that tell us that the world around us has greater control over us than the truth of God that sets us free.



The Dysfunctional/Functional Person

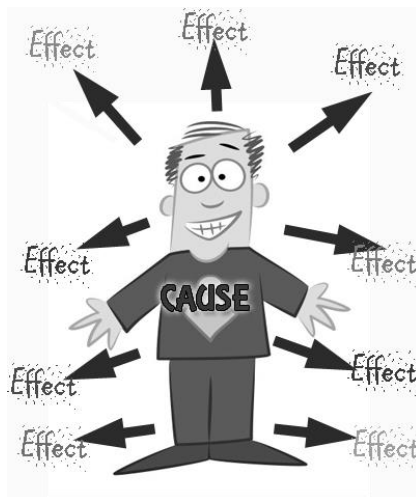
The dysfunctional/functional person finds excuses to stay stuck because their surroundings dictate to them the belief that they are victims.

Dysfunctional/Functional people like to associate with people who reaffirm that life is tough. They like to be reassured that the economy is affecting others and that times aren't what they used to be.



A dysfunctional and "functional person loves the comfort of their friends who don't push them or inspire them to step up to a whole new level." (From the book Key Person of Influence).

The Bible tells us to "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:11 NKJV) To reckon means to act or consider the dysfunctional man and his chains of belief as dead! Instead, we are to embrace the fact that we are alive to God.



On the other hand, a vital person is a force to be reckoned with. A vital person is someone who understands that they were made in the image and likeness of God who has become a causal force within their life.

Jesus Himself was a vital person, his connection to the Father caused him to walk in independence from His circumstances and surroundings.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

He displayed the heart of a servant and gave value to those to whom he ministered. His life was one of confidence and peace because he knew who he was.

The expectation is that the life of Christ flows uninhibited within us in an effortless manner. This takes faith on our part because at any moment of the day we can look into the mirror of life and it will reflect back to us our shortcomings and weaknesses.

The temptation to accept these reflections as our own identity is strong and deeply rooted in our psyche. It takes the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the truth. And as you hear it, receive it in faith and continually remind yourself that the old self is dead, this is not who you are and does not in any way represent you.

You are connected to the Father and now are one with Him. “The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17)

The answer is “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith”

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 simply reacting to circumstances, I can become a vital person.

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.

What this means for us as individuals has huge consequences. Because you and I are created beings by God Himself, made in His image and likeness. We ourselves have been purposed by God Himself to function in a proactive way.

God has created you to affect and to change your environment. Not by becoming more religious, but by becoming more mindful, more mindful of your surroundings and the people in it.

We stand apart from all other creation. God has placed His own nature, His very DNA within the fabric of our individual 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? 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 mean that you don't play the blame game.

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

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 his or her world eventually came to this same conclusion at some level. They became passionate about the ideas, beliefs, and direction of their lives and chose to live them out with intention.

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 frightened 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 toward being that light in a world of darkness.

## **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 becoming a master influencer.

Many years ago a telephone company organized a study of the conversations that people had on the phone. Their purpose was 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 that we are 100% at the center of our own universes. Pick up a photo of a group shot with you hidden in a crowd, whose picture do you instantly see first?

Jesus was, of course, a master influencer, and the reason He was so good at it 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, rather than 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 what the person needed seemed obvious to everyone there.

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.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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 helping 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 every day 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.

Invest in people! Don't hold them back. Instead, help them fulfill their desire and you will be handsomely rewarded.

## REFLECTIONS

1. Explain the difference between cause and effect as a Christian?
2. In what way do you see yourself adding being a vital person who gives value?
3. If you are with someone, ask them the following three questions.
  - a. What are you most passionate about in life?
  - b. What do you like to do for fun?
  - c. What is your most important project?

**Acting in confidence proves  
to our feelings that the old  
patterns of fear have no hold on  
your future.**



# CHAPTER SIX

## **You Were Made For A Purpose!**

The mission of Grace Empowered Living is to inspire and show people how to rise above the chaos and noise of their culture. We want to inspire you to become a beacon of light to a world that desperately needs you to show up.

We invite you to join us in this mission. This is an opportunity to be a part of something great as we activate the gifts, talents, and the life calling of believers globally.

This calling comes out of a complete understanding of your true identity as a child of God seated together with Him in heavenly places! (Gal. 2:6)

This means that your identity and definition does not come from anything outside of yourself. What matters now is the view and opinion of God which ignites your spirit and soul in a world that is looking for you.

God sees you perfect and righteous. His embrace is a complete one that assures you that His love knows know limits.

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

His love for you is complete right where you are at in your life. Being a dysfunctional, functional or vital has nothing to do with His love for you.

Hear me, my friend;

The life of your past does not define who you are. Your present circumstances, relationships, health, and pain cannot dictate to the way you see yourself. These wheelchairs and boxes that have held you are no longer a barrier to your happiness and joy.

## **Forgive Yourself**

You might be saying to me right now, “But you don’t know what I have done to screw my life up. I have failed in so many ways and it is impossible to see myself the way you are telling me I should.”

Forgive yourself by embracing God’s forgiveness and acceptance for you. Jesus Himself took your pain and bore your suffering. He gave His life as an exchange for yours so that you could walk in the same completeness and wholeness that He had.

Imagine for a moment that you are standing before the cross of Jesus saying the words, “I forgive myself because you first forgave me! I send away every memory and struggle to the cross and instead embrace your life of freedom for me.”

Repeat and remind yourself of the words of Paul the Apostle as he sat in prison, a prison that would try its best to define and tell him he was worthless and that his life was over.

Hear the words of Paul as I personalize and paraphrase them for you:

My complete existence is defined and confined in Jesus. Every detail of my day-to-day life flows from the consciousness of my true identity and worth as defined in him.

No distraction or contradiction can reduce my life to any other reality. My wholeness and completeness come from him. He sets me free to live the life of my design! (Eph. 4:1)

The relationships around us continually wage war against us about our worth and value. Maybe you know this from those closest to you. It is easy to project our inner feelings of ourselves onto others in the way that we emotionally judge the ways that they treat us.

The simplest example I can give you might be the words and reactions of a mother who says to herself, “My child did not show up for Christmas dinner.” Her personal interpretation might be one of hurt, telling herself “They don’t care for me!” Or, on the other hand, she might simply be concerned and say to herself “They may be going through something hard or painful. I need to reach out to them and pray for them.” Which self-talk will lead to the best result for this mother and her child?

### **The Righteousness of God Revealed**

The word righteousness is one of those big words that escape the understanding of most of us. When you look at the meaning of the word closely, it means the ability to see things as they are. This is the reality that Paul refers to in his letter to the church in Ephesus.

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

Paul in Romans 1:18 tells us that it is this righteousness that is in direct contrast to the counterfeit earthly understanding that is blindfolding people from the truth.

For instance, the law reveals how guilty and sinful man is, while the gospel reveals how forgiven and restored to our original blueprint and design man is.

The problem is our conclusions about ourselves. As Paul puts it in Romans chapter one: We have lost sight of God's design and purpose. Because we have lost sight of God, we have lost sight of ourselves. We exchanged God and his view and opinion about our lives for a lie. This is the reason for human dysfunction. They are living upside down in a right side up world.

The life of our design, our ability to see things as they really are, is elusive outside of the redemption that Christ achieved for us on our behalf.

### **The Truth about Sin and Repentance**

The word repentance, which means a change of mind, shows up in the New Testament sixty times. So with that in mind, the answer to whether repentance is available is obviously "yes"!

Repentance is the ongoing decision to change your mind by acknowledging that you can only live life effectively through your connectedness to God. How many times have you been inspired and quickened in your heart to change your mind and attitude toward something?

You might have acted or responded in a wrong way, but once you recognized a better way you repented and chose a different direction.

You see, in the context of how we grow as a believer, true repentance has nothing to do with coming to God and asking for forgiveness. The fact is that your sins have already been forgiven.

Repentance is the changing of your mind from the way you have seen yourself in the past to the truth of how God sees you now.

### **Repentance is a Radical Mind Shift In How You See Things**

The Bible tells us that it is the goodness of God that leads a person to repentance. Let me put it this way to make a point: it is our knowing and realizing how good God is toward us that leads us to making radical mind shifts where it concerns our identity and our original blueprint and design!

My hope is that this book has already brought you to repentance numerous times as you realized that you needed to change your mind about how God sees you.

The word used for repentance is *metanoia* which comes from *meta* which means together with, and *nous*, mind. In other words, together with God's mind. What this is suggesting is a radical mind shift to God's view and opinion.

In context to this definition of the word repentance, what does that say about what sin is? Be careful how you answer because the answer is likely not what you are thinking.

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

If repentance is all about making a radical mind shift then it can't possibly be about our behavior, but rather the thing that drives behavior: Our heart beliefs and our ability to see things as they are.

Here is my personal definition of sin: Not living congruently with God's design and blueprint for your life!

You might be asking, "What about sinful behavior?" Our behavior is the end result of what we believe about God and ourselves. We have wrongly made it about "doing right" instead of "being right."

A relationship with God that is based upon performance is a difficult one that eventually leads to complete frustration for many. There are others who do thrive in this environment but it is because they can use it as a way to control people.

Righteousness is the ability to see things as they are. It is a faith-inspired life that is practical. It sets people free from self-limiting beliefs that stop them from moving forward concerning the desires of their heart.

### **The Duck Who Thought He Was A Chicken**

There is a thing called imprinting that happens in the brain of certain small animals when they are young. Small birds are especially subject to this phenomenon that even affects their nervous systems.

In scientific studies scientists removed a duckling from his mother at birth and placed him with a chicken. The duckling imprinted on the chicken and thought the chicken was its mother. It followed the chicken everywhere. That duck had a mistaken identity because it thought it was a chicken.

Eventually, they moved the duck to the pen that held chickens. The chickens pretty quickly knew that this was no chicken at all, that it was a duck. As a result, they nearly pecked that poor duck to death.

But in all that pecking, they did not make the duck think he was a duck. He continued to think he was a chicken and didn't understand why they were mad at him.

They put the duck into a pen with other ducks. Nobody pecked it but the duck wasn't happy. He thrashed himself against the fencing searching for a way out so he could get back to his chicken family.

The world is full of ducks who think they are chickens. Living upside down in a right side up world.

### **Identity is everything!**

Limitless living can only be found by an identity capable of supporting it.

What I mean when I say this is that it is kind of like having a cup with holes in the bottom of it. It doesn't matter how much water you pour into it, it will never fill up. It's like knowing what your call and purpose are in life, but because you have some gaping holes in your understanding and the way you see yourself where it concerns relevance, security, and identity, you will never be able to step into what God has for you.

### **From Orphan to Child of God.**

What is an orphan?

## Ready To Make a Difference?

It is someone who has lost one or both parents. From our study here it refers to someone who is without their heavenly father. As a result feelings of loss and abandonment influence us in negative ways.

These feelings show up in our lives in many ways and they are all negative and destructive. The real problem is that like the duck who thinks he is a chicken we become imprinted as an orphan.

God's word to you is that you have been delivered from being an orphan and have now been translated into the kingdom. This makes you a child of God.

The way you see yourself will either stop you from experiencing God's goodness or it will allow you to receive everything He has for you. Who are you and what do you believe about who you are?

Certainly negative things that happened to us from our biological parents as we grew up reinforce the orphan dysfunction we feel.

You may have gone through past abuse and still carry the past remnants of that pain inside of you. You might have guilt about something that took place in a past marriage or relationship.

Whatever it is, you need to embrace God's forgiveness and then you need to forgive yourself.

You might be in need of healing and are thinking that God has forgotten about you, or is testing you or even is angry with you.



You see, these are all common beliefs about who God is in our lives, and they are all wrong!

He loves you as you are right now. He loves you as His son or daughter. It is not His will that you suffer. Embrace your true identity and see yourself as His own special child.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

This is who you are no matter what you may be experiencing presently. The Holy Spirit desires to make this a reality in your life.

## REFLECTIONS

1. Explain on what basis God's love for you is determined?
2. What does repentance mean?
3. Define what sin is from this chapter.
4. What is the answer to our own imprinting that has a grip on us?
5. How does God see you right now in your life?

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## The Grace Empowered Life!

What does living a grace empowered life mean?

The most basic definition is: Grace is God's ability in us! We have been told that it is God's unmerited favor and that is true, but there is so much more. God grace not only brings mercy and forgiveness but empowers us to be a son and daughter of the Most High.

**Is it God's Ability in us to Be What We Could Not Be on Our Own and Do What We Could Not Do Our Own.**

His nature flows through us as we discover Gods full intention for our lives.

How does this happen?

First and foremost it is by embracing what God has accomplished for us through the gift of salvation. The announcement is loud and clear, can you hear the words whispered to your heart?

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

Listen closely and you will hear... “You who were a stranger to God, are no longer alienated from Him.”

This is Good News!

We come into the knowledge of the truth through the Bible, which is made alive in our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit. We then step into the truth that is revealed to us by faith.

Who or what is our enemy?

To be certain, the lie was seeded into every level of our world many thousands of years ago. The lie that was first believed by Eve, who then shared it with Adam. The same lie that continues to perpetuate itself throughout every facet of our humanity still lives in the hearts and minds of our generation.

Growing up in The There Zone is the great delusion that can only be broken by placing your trust and reliance in the finished work that has been provided for you.

### **Taking Your Gift, Abilities, Passion and Voice to the Next Level**

As you discover the truth of your freedom in Christ your dependence and trust grows.

You are now realizing that it is in Him you live and move and have your being. (Acts 7:28 NIV)

As I stated in the introduction of the example of a river that is flowing freely now that the dam has been removed. But until that happens the water remains constricted and the farming land stays fruitless.

Another area that too stops us from moving forward is that we place ourselves in a waiting mode. This is because we think that we will somehow miss God. The mantra of most Christians becomes, one to get ready, two to get ready, three to get ready, so on and so forth. They never get to the go part.

Frank Tillapaugh, author of the book, “Unleashing the Church: Getting People Out of the Fortress and into Ministry,” wrote back in 1981 that it was his job as a pastor to release people to follow what God has placed on their hearts. In today’s world, it seems many in leadership still constrict people. Obviously, there is criteria laid out in scripture for those who serve as leaders to the church body. Frank believed in releasing people to do the work of the ministry outside of the church.

If someone came to him with a creative idea he would provide them a time to solicit others to see if others had the same heart. This was a very practical way to solve the issue of God’s will on the idea. The mandate to Go into all the world and preach the gospel was to simply do what it says.

I believe our service to God was meant to flow into every aspect of our lives, not just compartmentalized to traditional outreach programs. Realizing this sets you free in every way to allow God to flow through you all the time, in your work, your play and on into the relationships around you.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

“How do I know when it is God and when it is not?”

This is a common question that keep many people stuck.

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

Trusting these words for your life takes us out of the hesitation and into a place of complete trust. This is an area of difficulty for people, mostly because of the chains of belief about themselves, others and the world around them. The beautiful most awesome thing is that you have been set free and are now walking in liberty.

Yes, you might still be in discovery mode, something each of us will deal with our entire lives, but the grip of your outside world will loosen as time goes by.

Be willing to practice! Stepping out into the unknown is always a bit scary. Knowing and realizing what is yours in Christ gives you the strength to step out. Begin with taking action on the little nudges. Ask the Holy Spirit to prompt you every day where it concerns your steps. Remember the promise that your steps are ordered by the Lord.

The Bible also promises us that God gives us the desires that are in our heart. There is no escaping it, those things that are deep within you are of Him. We simply need the confidence to make that first small step.

You were made for a purpose and your beginning was in God. Think about it, every invention begins with an original thought and

you are God's original thought, in fact, you are the greatest thought that God has ever had!

Ephesians 2:10 says that we are engineered by his design; he molded and manufactured us in Christ. We are his workmanship, his poetry. (God finds inspired expression of Christ in us. (Greek, poeima).

We are fully fit to do good, equipped to give attractive evidence of his likeness in us in everything we do. (God has done everything possible to find spontaneous and effortless expression of his character in us in our everyday lifestyle. (Mirror Bible)

We are not merely Christ-cloned; we are individually crafted to give display to the image and likeness of our Maker within our own person, our fingerprint, our touch, our smile, and the cadence of our voice. (Divine Embrace)

You can rest in the fact that you were made for a purpose, to display His image forever. Philippians 2:7 tells us that Jesus took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. What this tells us is that the creator God visited our planet camouflaged in a human body; his mother's womb was His passport.

Had he arrived with a "superman cape" His life, death and resurrection would be irrelevant. Why? Because He came to prove

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

that God did not make a mistake when he made you. You have been made in the same image.

## **Turning Little Into Much**

The story of the five loaves and two fish are well known. It is a story of expansion and God's grace working in an impossible situation.

What are you looking at in your life? The little you have, or the faith and trust of a son and daughter that chooses to believe that all things are possible? The story of Jesus feeding 5,000 is the same story that faces each of us. We look into our own hands and lives and, in perspective, they look empty.

But God again asks us, "What is in your hands?" and if we are willing to step out with the little, much can be had. Moses was no different, he looked at God's instructions and thought, "This is impossible. Speak to Pharaoh and demand that he let the people go?"

God asked him, "What is in your hand?" Moses looked around him, completely caught off guard. 'What do you mean, "What's in my hand?"' all I have is this stick.'

The lesson was given to Moses that day and it is the same lesson you are being given right now. Start with what you have now!

I remember the specific day and hour I spoke those same words to God.



“I feel inadequate in light of what I know you have placed before me.” The words of instruction to me that day were clear and strong, “I will pass the person with education, knowledge, and expertise to get to one person with desire!”

Was it always easy? No, it was not. Were their times I failed? Yes, but the secret was not the absence of pain but the willingness to continue with what I knew was real in my heart. Were there times I lost focus? Absolutely. Situations, obstacles are all a part of life’s journey and will surely try to throw you off course.

That’s it, the next step is yours.

### **Your Voice Has Value**

Psychologist Abraham Maslow called it self-actualization, the primary quest of all humanity! The only problem is that he diagnosed the human dilemma from a world view that did not include God.

Do you remember studying about this psychologist when you were in college? He stated that all humanity was on a journey to satisfy human needs. We understand that this is true in light of our previous study about Eve and Adam believing the lie that what they needed was outside of themselves.

Maslow went on to state that all these needs are in a hierarchy of ranks. In other words, our needs for survival, i.e. water, food, and shelter, outrank other needs such as needs for significance and acceptance. This journey leads us from one tiny achievement to the

## Ready To Make a Difference?

next level of achievement until we have reached the top of this pentacle and have self-actualized.

Imagine all humanity climbing trying to reach the top, all using whatever they can to achieve this coveted place. Clambering, stealing, fighting, jabbing, killing. As Maslow and others describe it, you will find people like Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi up there on top.

Now the way I see it, there are lots of people clambering to the top and most fall off to the bottom tier on their journey. The reason they fall is that Maslow's mountain is always changing, moving, and shaking. I call it the law of deterioration, it is what the book of Hebrews refers to when it says that everything that can be shaken will be shaken.

But what if I told you that there is only one person who truly climbed Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This person was Jesus Christ and he did it on behalf of all humanity! It was the mountain that Jesus bled and died on, we know it as the mountain called Golgotha.

He and he alone could do it, because as the Bible says, he was without sin. In other words, he was righteous! Do you remember the definition of righteousness? The ability to see things as they are. He had God's view and opinion, he knew that the inner satisfaction of having his needs met only from the kingdom of God.

No wonder he said things like, "*I have food to eat that you do not know about.*" and to the devil's three temptations to get him to

reach outside of himself to meet his own needs, “*You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.*”

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But still, God loved us with such great love! He is so rich in compassion and mercy. <sup>5</sup>Even when we were dead and doomed in our many sins, he united us into the very life of Christ and saved us by his wonderful grace! <sup>6</sup>He raised us up with Christ the exalted One, and we ascended with him into the glorious perfection and authority of the heavenly realm, for we are now co-seated as one with Christ! (Eph. 2:4-6 TPT)

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### **How To Climb The Mountain Without Breaking a Sweat**

There is a Greek word in ancient texts for this, it the word *arête*. In ancient Greece, *arête* meant "goodness" or "excellence". The Bible defines it as virtue or praise. Earlier in this book I gave you a scripture that uses this word. It is in I Peter 2:9. Watch for the words “praises.” in the following verse.

“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;”

Did you see it? “That you may proclaim the *arête* of Him who called you.” Now, this is powerful when you understand the full definition of *arête*. We as humans tend to question ourselves, looking for permission to live and step into our voice and purpose. But when you understand where you came from it gives a whole new meaning to your life.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

In ancient Greece the word *arête* meant “being the best person you could possibly be.” So *arête* would mean different things for different people. To a wife it might mean being the best wife a woman could possibly be. To a warrior it would mean being the best warrior possible and functioning to his full capacity.

And not only people could have *arête* - a well-built house, a beautiful piece of pottery, and a strong horse all had *arête* too. In Plato's Allegory of the Cave, the ideal form of a thing is its *arête*, the goal that everything is seeking.

Now here is the kicker. You are God's *arête*. You see, according to the Bible passage I quoted, you were created out of Him. You are the natural result of who our creator is, the very best! You are the result and outcome of God's doing what He is and what he does.

The mountain has been climbed on your behalf, you are now a brand new species that never existed before. You now have complete resources on the inside of you to live a complete, effective life.

Feelings have nothing to do with the truth of what has taken place. They only show the shadows of the previous wheelchair that you once sat in. Perhaps the key to breaking free from these old and distant patterns is to continually do what a ministry friend repeated to me over and over. Act Like You Know What You Are Doing!

This is more than a fake it until you make it, this is you acting on the reality you have in your heart!

Acting in confidence proves to our feelings that the old patterns of fear have no hold on our future. Stepping out and missing at times it is better than hesitation and inaction. At some point we have to believe the promise that it is God who directs our steps.

## REFLECTIONS

1. Define grace and how it works in the life of the believer?
2. Who or what is the real enemy?
3. Can God prompt you consciously and unconsciously to step out in areas of your life? Give one personal example.
4. What is the meaning of God's *arête* living on the inside of us?

**What you are willing to accept will eventually become your normal.**

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Discovering Gods Best in You

Finding and fulfilling God's call and purpose starts with a revelation of what the finished work of God's provision means for your life. It is realizing that everything that you need is already available and on the inside of you right now!

Secondly, the reality and sense of ownership takes place as you seek out and discover new possibilities of what this truth means to you in your life. An orphan or servant lacks the feelings of ownership. As a child of God, you have been filled with His fullness.

Think about what it means to be an owner. If a person approached and demanded your car keys in a parking lot as you were opening your car door what would you do? If they tried to convince you that this was their car and now yours what would be your reaction?

Would you shuffle your feet while looking down and apologize?

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

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

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 yourself touching lives in your community?

Your call and purpose will flow naturally through your gifts and talents. Take the time to ask yourself what it is you enjoy doing most? Ask yourself, am I a “people person” who enjoys being social or am I more task oriented?

Am I more direct or indirect in my communication style? These are all important questions to ask yourself.

## **Leveraging You**

Activating your passion comes as a result of leveraging your story into the lives of people around you. When you are sharing your story and your knowledge with others something powerful takes place.

You are a reward to someone! Somebody needs your difference, your uniqueness, your experiences, knowledge and outcomes. You might say, “Scott, I don’t have anything to say that anyone would like to hear”. Not true my friend, you were made for connection, you are the life raft to that drowning person who hasn’t been where you are now.

You have been there and know what it is like, and you now have the solution to their problem.



Your story might be about how you broke through your fears and learned to play the saxophone at age 60. You might be like my friend Gail Hamilton and have lost your sight as a young person. Instead of succumbing to her handicap, Gail chose to look through the eyes of her heart to live a life of possibility. She received an endorsement for her book from President Jimmy Carter because of her many accomplishments.

### **Be Authentic**

Everyone wears a mask of one sort or another; we want to appear to others as though we “have it together” and have never struggled. But the truth of the matter is that everyone has struggled in one way or another, and your victory over your struggles can help someone else achieve victory too. The point I am trying to make here is that your personal story is a powerful one. Yes, people will connect with you when you share from your own experience.

Your story is what has brought you to where you are today. This book would have never been written if not for the struggles I have had.

I’ll never forget the time many years ago when we, as a young couple, took on the job of pastoring a small church in a town of 10,000. At night I worked as a janitor and ran a buffer machine up and down store aisles to support us.

I ordered an audio course from a self-help catalog. I can’t remember the title of the course, but I’ll never forget an exercise I was asked to do. The course recommended that I begin to imagine my life the way I desired it to be!

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

Through that exercise I imagined myself standing in front of large audiences speaking, teaching, and sharing my heart. As I listened to the course with a headset on my head, going up and down the aisles of that store, listening and imagining, I found myself becoming emotional. Something deep inside of me erupted as I began to probe into my life's purpose.

The sad truth is that to find those answers took many years, many heartaches and a whole lot of rejection, which I did not always handle well. My own insecurities became my biggest stumbling block.

### **Know the Principle of Highest and Best Use**

This is a term that is known by most who are in the field of real estate investment. It is an important lesson for understanding how we serve those around us.

An example of highest and best use, for example, would be to look at an empty lot in the middle of the busiest business district of your town and city. What would you say is the highest and best use for that piece of land? Would you grow crops there and start a farmers market? Probably not! On the other hand, would you build a high rise office building in the middle of agricultural land?

The highest and best use would be based on a number of things in the field of real estate and it relies on an appraisal analysis of several things. For you and I, we look closely at our own personality's makeup for clues when we do our own appraisal.

One way to think about this is to know your strengths and look for opportunities to use them in your work, at home, and in your relationships. If you are a leader or manager of others there is also tremendous value in knowing how to leverage the strengths of your team members.

I designed a workbook called “The Gift Finder Tool” which offers a way to identify your own personality style by answering some questions and scoring yourself. We call it a “step one tool” that will assist you in locating and developing your passion, vision , and purpose.

If you are building a business where you are interacting with others, this tool can help you learn how to recognize these personality types so you can communicate more effectively.

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.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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.

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 honest 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 has 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 with which we all are faced, and all too often 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 effective 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 been given to us.

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 a hope of ever having 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.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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?

A Mission Statement is a brief, well-thought-out paragraph describing the basic mission 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 exist, and where I 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 it 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 that your job or role in life can only be a division or a part of your mission statement. Your job or 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 means.

Your Mission gives you purpose.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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 fear.

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!

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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.

Clue #1 What gets you excited?

Clue #2 Where do you have favour?

Clue #3 Can this be related to past experiences?

Clue #4 What are you known for?

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

## REFLECTIONS

1. Does someone who has the mindset of an orphan have a sense of ownership? Why not?
2. What do you think is the highest and best use for area's in your life?
3. What are some of the clues that can help you create your mission statement?

# CHAPTER NINE

## Leadership, Empowered to Serve

We hear this message of grace and 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.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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 opportunities to serve.

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 of the world's definition is what is actually true.

Walk into 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 recognize themselves as being a leader.

They will point to someone else and defer. 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 main reason people don't see themselves as leaders is that 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.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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 do something significant and 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 or take other risks heedlessly.

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.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this book, I had an incredible entrepreneurial drive as a kid and as a result was very creative.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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. It would have been far better if I was taught how to turn that passion into massive value through my ideas and that value into profits.

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 you can serve others with it. 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 must decide what is unique about themselves, who is their market and what is the sound of their voice (market message) to that market.

**Every person has a passion and every passion has value, and it is that value that creates opportunities.**

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.

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.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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 really is.

'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.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

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 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.

## **Ready To Make a Difference?**

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 anyway. 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.

## **Keep your focus straight**

For years, the way Christianity has preached to us was about the sin and the war of conflict that people struggle with in the flesh. To be honest, this type of thinking keeps us from understanding what is truly ours through the finished work of Jesus.

The question is, do we focus on what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross or do we focus on the struggle and definitions of our past?

But God still loved us with such great love. He is so rich in compassion and mercy. <sup>5</sup> Even when we were dead and doomed in our many sins, he united us into the very life of Christ and saved us by his wonderful grace! <sup>6</sup> He raised us up with Christ the exalted One, and we ascended with him into the glorious perfection and authority of the heavenly realm, for we are now co-seated as one with Christ! (Eph. 2:4-6 TPT)



Do we embrace what the Bible emphatically tells us, that we are “complete in Him” (Col. 2:10) or do we focus on the lie that we have believed on so strongly that we are incomplete and still lack what it is we think we are missing?

## REFLECTIONS

1. Make a list of what you are most passionate about.
2. Make a list of the types of value that comes from what you are passionate about.
3. Who do you think you can serve that value to?
4. How would you define leadership?

**When a person discovers his or her true identity in Christ, no plan of the enemy will ever be a success.**

## Final Words

By now, I imagine that in many ways you feel like you've been drinking from a fire hose, which I completely get. What I have provided you is the result of years of study and experience about how God's purpose and design work.

What this means for you is that you are able to tap into this life message and instead of feeling overwhelmed, you'll realize that this book is actually a shortcut. I have introduced you to a new way of thinking about God, yourself, as well as your world.

I know that it takes time sometimes for our experience to catch up to our knowledge, but I trust in the Holy Spirit to awaken you. If I can move the needle in your life, even if it is ten or twenty percent, imagine what can happen! My prayers and desire is that I am setting you on a journey that not only leaves a positive effect on your life but has a domino effect on others that you will touch as well.

There is a scripture I placed in the front of this book that speaks loudly.

Let your light so shine before men, that  
they may see your good works and glorify  
your Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:16)

## Ready To Make a Difference?

God has made a plan for each and every person that is born into this world.

He has placed in you a divine combination of giftedness and talent that when activated with his love knows no bounds.

It is His love unleashed in and through your uniqueness that gives God His greatest glory.

His plan for you is that you function in your capacity using the love he gave you to serve those around you. A river flows and functions, a tree grows and functions, flowers bloom and without any forethought or restraint, function in their full capacity.

Points to remember.

1. God loves you no matter what.
2. It is God's desire that you function to your full capacity.
3. Stop over-thinking it, just begin.
4. Use what is in your hand now and you'll discover more.
5. Love God and love people, simple!

Your mission is based on a combination of several things.

Your mission can operate and function in a variety of environments and situations. In other words, God does not lock you into a pre-prescribed plan that you must live up to. The perfect will of God is that you simply function in your full capacity. This statement alone should create a big sigh of relief for you.

The question is, what is it that gives God his greatest joy? I believe it is when you discover your God-given uniqueness to the world around you and serve that gift to others.

The prophet Isaiah wrote about Jerusalem, but it is a truth that is applicable to your life.

Arise, shine for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. (Isaiah 60:1) You see, the command comes first to take action where it concerns your light.

To you, that light might be dim at first, but as you step forward the promise is there. The glory of the Lord, His own glory, will be seen upon you. So much so, that it says “Nations,” which is like describing your tribe. The people you are called to will then be drawn to you as a result.

Arise, shine, and then serve those who are drawn to your light, is a powerful conclusion to this book. It is found in not stepping away from your life in Christ and where it concerns the world around you.

Shining is actually stepping into your gift and serving others. His glory will show up in your job, business, home, and life. That is a promise. Have faith and trust that it is Him who is at work in you both to will and do His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13)

As a Christian, the Bible tells us, all things become new (I Corinthians 5:17). Our identity has changed from the power of darkness to the kingdom of His Son.

## Ready To Make a Difference?

Your view and opinion now is to be established in the view and opinion of how God sees you. Your life is no longer to be measured by an outside voice or event, which means that you will become much more emotionally stable in a world that is reckless and in chaos.

This enables you to step forward in new strength and confidence where needed.

...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Your life is like an unstoppable stream flowing into the dark crevices of our culture and world where it can then shed light and life. This is the power of the gospel, to see as He sees: the restoration of all things through Jesus Christ.

Remember, your personal definitions determine your success or failure.

Grace Empowered Living is a ministry that provides a community of like-minded people who have a desire to make a difference in the world around them. You are invited to join our Facebook group and find out about our other tools that will help you.

Grace Empowered Leadership Academy is an online and traveling school that walks people step by step through helping people discover, develop, and deploy their life to be one that is vital, an irreplaceable life-force.

We also offer coaching that will help you move forward in discovering what it means to walk free from the wheelchairs that have held you. We are great believers that all things are possible with God!

## **We Would Like To Hear From You**

Has this book ministered to you? Do you have a testimony you would like to share? Do you sense a new stirring and direction in your life as a result of this book? We want to hear from you. We want to also hear your suggestions. Are there area's you wish we spent more time covering?

It is always an encouragement when we hear back from readers about how our materials have touched people's lives. We also enjoy about ways these materials are being used.

It is our joy to serve you!

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