

"THE ESSENTIALS IN OUR CHRISTIAN JOURNEY"

(PART 3)

PROVERBS 29:18-19

4. YOU NEED A PLAN TO LIVE OUT

YOU NEED AN OUTLET FOR EXPRESSING THE TALENTS AND ABILITIES THAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU. YOU NEED A PLAN AND A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN MAKE A CONTRIBUTION WITH YOUR LIFE, WITH YOUR TALENTS, WITH YOUR ABILITIES IN THIS WORLD. YOU NEED A PLAN FOR HOW GOD IS GOING TO USE YOU TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE. REALLY IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO TWO OPTIONS: YOU CAN LIVE YOUR LIFE BY DESIGN OR YOU CAN LIVE YOUR LIFE BY DEFAULT. YOU CAN LIVE YOUR LIFE INTENTIONALLY OR YOU CAN LIVE YOUR LIFE ACCIDENTALLY. YOU CAN MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU OR YOU CAN WASTE IT, BLOW IT, AND KIND OF DRIFT THROUGH LIFE UNINTENTIONALLY, WITHOUT A PLAN AND WASTING WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO YOU.

THE TRUTH AND GOOD NEWS IS, GOD DOES HAVE A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE. THE FACT THAT YOU'RE ALIVE MEANS HE HAS A PLAN FOR YOU. YOU'VE HEARD ME SAY THIS MANY TIMES, LIFE DOES NOT MAKE SENSE UNTIL YOU UNDERSTAND YOU WERE MADE BY GOD AND FOR GOD. HE MADE YOU FOR HIMSELF. LIFE DOESN'T MAKE SENSE UNTIL YOU UNDERSTAND THAT.

SO HOW DO I KNOW GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE? HOW DO I KNOW MY PLACE IN THIS WORLD? HOW DO I KNOW MY NICHE, WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO, WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO GIVE BACK? WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH MY LIFE?

I CAN SAY IT IN ONE WORD. GOD'S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE IS SERVICE. THAT'S GOD'S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE. GOD WANTS YOU

TO SERVE HIM AND GOD WANTS YOU TO SERVE HIM BY SERVING OTHERS.

NOTICE [EPHESIANS 2:10](#) "GOD HAS MADE US WHAT WE ARE..." YOU ARE WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE BECAUSE GOD INTENDED THAT. BECAUSE HE MADE YOU TO BE YOU MEANS HE HAS A PLAN FOR YOU TO FULFILL. IF YOU DON'T BE YOU, WHO'S GOING TO BE YOU? ONLY YOU CAN BE YOU IN THIS WORLD. SO YOU MAY NOT LIKE IT, YOU MAY SAY, "I WISH I LOOKED LIKE 'THAT' OR HAVE 'THAT' TALENT..." GOD WANTS YOU TO BE YOU AND HE WANT YOU TO FULFILL THE ROLL HE MADE YOU FOR AND THAT'S WHERE FULFILLMENT AND MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE COMES FROM. GOD MADE US WHAT WE ARE.

IT SAYS "... IN CHRIST JESUS GOD MADE US..." ...TO WATCH TELEVISION? NO. "GOD MADE US TO DO GOOD WORKS." THAT'S SERVICE. GOD MADE YOU TO SERVE. GOD DIDN'T PUT YOU ON THIS EARTH TO BE A SELFISH LITTLE CLOD WHERE YOU LIVE TOTALLY FOR YOURSELF AND EVERYBODY IN THE WORLD EXISTS FOR YOU, TO MEET YOUR NEEDS, TO GIVE YOU PLEASURE, TO PEEL GRAPES FOR YOU! IF YOU THINK THAT, YOU ARE SADLY MISTAKEN. IF YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE FOR YOURSELF, YOU HAVE MISSED THE PLAN YOU ARE MADE FOR AND YOU'RE NOT LIVING. YOU'RE EXISTING. YOU'RE JUST EXISTING! GOD DID NOT MEAN FOR YOU TO JUST LIVE FOR YOURSELF. HE WANTS YOU TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION IN LIFE. HE WANTS YOU TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK, TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN THE WORLD, IN THE WAY THAT'S BEST FOR YOU BASED ON HOW HE MADE YOU.

HOW DO I KNOW GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE? I LOOK AT THE BIBLE. THE BIBLE SAYS SERVE HIM. IT SAYS "GOD MADE US TO DO GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PLANNED IN ADVANCE FOR US TO LIVE OUR LIVES DOING." BEFORE YOU WERE EVEN BORN, GOD PLANNED THE WAYS OF SERVICE, THE WAYS OF MAKING AN IMPACT IN THE WORLD THAT HE WANTED YOU TO DO

SPECIFICALLY. WHEN YOU GET TO HEAVEN, GOD ISN'T GOING TO SAY, "WHY WEREN'T YOU LIKE THAT PERSON OVER THERE?" HE'S GOING TO SAY, "WHY DIDN'T YOU DO WHAT I MADE YOU TO DO? WHY DIDN'T YOU MAKE THE IMPACT THAT YOU WERE DESIGNED TO MAKE AND INFLUENCE WHERE I DESIGNED YOU TO INFLUENCE?"

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT GOD WANTS ME TO DO? HOW DO I KNOW WHERE HE WANTS ME TO SERVE? I LOOK AT THE WAY GOD HAS WIRED ME UP. GOD HAS UNIQUELY SHAPED YOU FOR A REASON. AT SADDLEBACK WE USE AN ACROSTIC, SHAPE. FIVE THINGS THAT SHAPE YOU, THAT MAKE YOU, YOU. YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS, YOUR HEART, YOUR ABILITY, YOUR PERSONALITY, YOUR EXPERIENCES. ALL THESE FIVE THINGS SHAPE YOU AND MAKE YOU, YOU. WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND HOW GOD HAS SHAPED YOU, THEN YOU'LL KNOW YOUR NICHE IN LIFE. YOU'LL KNOW WHAT YOU SHOULD BE DOING IN INVESTING YOUR LIFE.

HERE'S THE THING: WHEN YOU'RE A CHILD, IT'S VERY OBVIOUS WHAT YOUR SPIRITUAL SHAPE IS BECAUSE YOUR PARENTS AND EVERYBODY ELSE CAN SEE IT. IF YOU'RE GOOD AT ART, YOU'RE GOOD AT ART. IF YOU'RE GOOD AT MUSIC, YOU'RE GOOD AT MUSIC. IF YOU'RE GOOD AT NUMBERS OR WORDS OR PICTURES OR MECHANICAL THINGS OR ANIMALS, THOSE THINGS JUST NATURALLY COME OUT. IF YOU'RE A LEADER, YOU END UP BEING A LEADER ON THE PLAYGROUND. WHATEVER IT IS, IT STARTS SHOWING UP PRETTY EARLY.

BUT AS YOU GROW OLDER, SOCIALIZATION KICKS IN AND YOU START SAYING, "THAT'S WHAT GETS REWARDED IN THIS SOCIETY," OR "THAT'S WHAT MAKES MONEY IN THIS CULTURE. THAT'S WHERE THE BIG BUCKS ARE," OR "THAT'S WHAT GETS THE APPROVAL OF MY PARENTS OR MY FRIENDS," OR "THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME FAMOUS AND HAVE STATUS." AND

YOU END UP, OFTEN, IN SOME AREA OF LIFE THAT YOU WEREN'T SHAPED FOR AND NO AMOUNT OF MONEY, NO AMOUNT OF PRESTIGE AND STATUS, AND NO AMOUNT OF FAME IS GOING TO COMPENSATE THAT YOU'RE STILL MISERABLE. YOU'RE WONDERING WHY YOU HAVE ALL THESE THINGS YET YOU STILL DON'T FEEL SATISFIED.

BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT DOING WHAT YOU'RE SHAPED TO DO. AND YOU LET SOMEBODY GET YOU OFF TRACK.

HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS. YOUR SHAPE IS UNIQUE. THERE'S NOBODY ELSE LIKE YOU IN THE WORLD, SHAPED JUST LIKE YOU. GOD MADE YOUR SHAPE UNIQUE – YOUR HEART, ABILITY, PERSONALITY, EXPERIENCES, ALL THOSE THINGS – BECAUSE HE HAS A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION HE WANTS YOU TO MAKE IN THIS WORLD. AND HE WANTS YOU TO DO IT. BUT YOU WILL MISS THAT CONTRIBUTION IF YOU START COPYING OTHER PEOPLE. MOST PEOPLE START OFF AS ORIGINALS IN LIFE BUT THEY END UP AS CARBON COPIES OF OTHER PEOPLE. “LOOK AT WHAT THE JONES’ ARE DOING. WE NEED TO DO THAT!” YOU END UP BEING LIKE SOMEBODY THAT GOD NEVER INTENDED YOU TO BE LIKE. AND YOU MISS THE GLORY AND THE WONDER AND THE SATISFACTION OF BEING FULLY WHO GOD MEANT FOR YOU TO BE. DON'T MISS IT BY COPYING OTHERS.

THE BIBLE SAYS IN 1 CORINTHIANS 12 “GOD GIVES US MANY KINDS OF SPECIAL ABILITIES, BUT IT IS THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS THE SOURCE OF THEM ALL AND THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF SERVICE TO GOD BUT IT IS THE SAME LORD THAT WE ARE SERVING.” GOD USES US ALL IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS.

LET ME GIVE YOU A LITTLE SURPRISE: SOME OF YOUR GREATEST CONTRIBUTIONS IN LIFE ARE GOING TO BE UNPLANNED. SOME OF THE GREATEST IMPACT YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ON OTHER PEOPLE ARE SPONTANEOUS, ACCIDENTAL FROM YOUR POINT (THEY'RE NOT ACCIDENTAL FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT) BECAUSE

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE. BUT IF YOU'LL JUST BE OPEN AND AVAILABLE AND SAY, "GOD USE ME WHERE YOU WANT," SOMETIMES YOU'LL JUST SAY A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT THAT CHANGES THE DIRECTION OF A PERSON'S LIFE OR YOU'LL GIVE A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT OR A PAT ON THE BACK OR A HELPING HAND OR YOU'LL SHARE AN IDEA THAT WILL ABSOLUTELY TRANSFORM THE DIRECTION OF SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE. I CALL THOSE LITTLE MOMENTS THE LITTLE DIVINE MOMENTS OF LIFE. AND THEY'RE ALL AROUND YOU IF YOU'RE OPEN AND AWARE THAT GOD WANTS TO USE YOU. SAY, "GOD, USE ME TODAY IN ANY LITTLE WAY YOU SEE FIT." LITTLE WAYS ARE OFTEN LITTLE HINGES OF BIG DOORS.

YOU WILL MISS THAT IF YOU SPEND ALL YOUR TIME WORKING ON YOUR BIG PLAN, YOUR BIG DREAM, YOUR BIG SCHEME, YOUR BIG AMBITION THAT YOU'VE GOT ALL LAID OUT THAT THIS IS WHAT I'M GOING TO DO WITH MY LIFE. YOU GET SO BUSY ON THE BIG PLAN THAT YOU'VE THOUGHT UP THAT YOU MISS THE LITTLE DIVINE MOMENTS ALL AROUND YOU TO CHANGE THE WORLD ONE PERSON AT A TIME, TO MAKE AN IMPACT. NEVER ABUSE, NEVER MISS THE POWER OF A MOMENT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEBODY'S LIFE.

5. YOU NEED A PURPOSE TO LIVE FOR.

EVERYBODY NEEDS TO FEEL LIKE THEIR LIFE MATTERS. YOU NEED TO FEEL LIKE YOU'RE NOT JUST TAKING UP SPACE, THAT YOU'RE NOT JUST USING OXYGEN, WASTING RESOURCES, THAT YOUR LIFE MATTERS AND IT COUNTS. THAT YOU NOT ONLY HAVE A PLAN TO LIVE OUT BUT YOU HAVE A PURPOSE TO LIVE FOR. YOU NEED TO KNOW YOUR PURPOSE. IN FACT, IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR PURPOSE, LIFE DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. WHY BOTHER? WHY GET UP IN THE MORNING? WHY GO ANOTHER DAY FORWARD? IF YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

IN LIFE AND YOU'RE NOT FULFILLING GOD'S PLAN IN LIFE, GOD DOESN'T OWE YOU ONE MORE DAY. WHY DOES GOD OWE YOU ONE MORE SECOND OF BREATH OF LIFE IF YOU'RE JUST GOING TO USE IT ON YOURSELF RATHER THAN FULFILLING HIS PLAN AND HIS PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE?

SADLY, MOST PEOPLE NEVER EVEN DISCOVER GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THEIR LIVES. THEY LIVE AND DIE JUST EXISTING. WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE? YOU ONLY HAVE THREE ALTERNATIVES.

ONE, MAKE UP A PURPOSE. AND A LOT OF PEOPLE DO THAT. THEY JUST GRAB SOMETHING, GRAB ONTO IT AND THAT BECOMES THEIR MEANING FOR LIFE. THEY SAY THINGS LIKE, "I'M INTO SPORTS... I'M INTO MUSIC... I'M INTO POLITICS... I'M INTO MAKING MONEY... I'M INTO GOLF... I'M INTO REDECORATING MY HOME." ALL THOSE ARE FINE THINGS BUT THEY'RE LOUSY PURPOSES FOR LIVING. I ACTUALLY HAD SOMEBODY TELL ME ONE TIME, "I LIVE FOR THE WEEKEND!" WHAT A SHALLOW PURPOSE IN LIFE – I LIVE TO DO NOTHING. YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE A BUDDHIST BECAUSE NIRVANA SAYS YOU WORK YOURSELF INTO NOTHINGNESS. THAT IS NOT WHAT GOD SAYS. GOD SAYS "I DIDN'T CREATE YOU FOR NOTHINGNESS. I CREATED YOU FOR SOMETHING. I CREATED YOU FOR A PURPOSE, FOR MEANING, FOR A REASON. NOT JUST TO DO NOTHING." YOU TRY TO MAKE UP A PURPOSE AND PEOPLE DO THAT.

YOU WERE MADE WITH A HOLE IN YOUR HEART THAT ONLY GOD CAN FILL. YOU WERE MADE TO HAVE GOD AT THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE. IF GOD ISN'T NUMBER ONE AND AT THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE, THEN YOU'RE GOING TO TRY TO CRAM SOMETHING ELSE IN THERE THAT'S A POOR, SECOND CLASS SUBSTITUTE. AND YOU'RE GOING TO BE DISAPPOINTED. IF YOU GIVE FIRST CLASS ALLEGIANCE TO A SECOND CLASS CAUSE, YOU'RE GOING TO BE BETRAYED. NOTHING CAN TAKE THE

PLACE OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE. WHEN YOU TRY TO FILL IT WITH SOMETHING ELSE AND PUT SOMETHING ELSE AT THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE INSTEAD OF GOD THAT BECOMES YOUR GOD AND IT BECOMES AN ADDICTION.

YOU CAN GET ADDICTED TO ANYTHING. YOU CAN GET ADDICTED TO WATCHING TV. YOU CAN GET ADDICTED TO FOOD. YOU CAN GET ADDICTED TO THE APPROVAL OF YOUR HUSBAND. YOU CAN GET ADDICTED THINKING THAT YOUR WHOLE LIFE IS YOUR KIDS. THEY ARE NOT. THEY ARE IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE BUT THAT IS NOT JUST THE PURPOSE YOU'RE HERE ON EARTH FOR. YOU CAN BUILD YOUR LIFE AROUND MANY GOOD THINGS BUT AS LONG AS IT'S NOT GOD, IT'S WRONG. IT BECOMES AN IDOL. BUT WITH GOD AS NUMBER ONE IN YOUR LIFE EVERYTHING ELSE FALLS INTO IT'S PROPER PLACE AND GETS THE BALANCE AND HEALTH AND ATTENTION THAT IT NEEDS. DON'T MAKE ANYTHING ELSE A GOD IN YOUR LIFE – ANY OTHER PERSON, ANY EVENT, WHATEVER.

SOME PEOPLE TRY TO ESCAPE FROM THE FUTILITY OF LIFE BY PLEASURE. THEY LIVE TO PARTY AND SEEK NEW THRILLS. THEY LIVE FOR THAT ADRENALINE RUSH THAT COMES EITHER THROUGH THE NEWEST MOVIE OR THE LATEST EXTREME SPORT. THEY ONLY FEEL LIKE THEY'RE LIVING WHEN THEY'RE ON THE EDGE AND THE ADRENALINE IS PUMPING. THOSE ARE FINE THINGS BUT THEY'RE NOT THE PURPOSE OF LIFE. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS MORE THAN BEING ENTERTAINED. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS MORE THAN HAVING FUN. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS MORE THAN JUST ACQUIRING A LOT OF THINGS THAT YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE BEHIND IN 60 OR 70 YEARS ANYWAY. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS MORE THAN JUST RETIRING. I KNOW MANY PEOPLE THAT THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THEIR LIFE IS "RETIRE. I WANT TO GET TO THE END OF MY LIFE SO I CAN SAY I GOT TO THE END OF MY LIFE." THAT'S A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE. I READ RECENTLY THAT HALF

OF THE MEN IN NEW YORK CITY DIE WITHIN TWO YEARS OF RETIREMENT. WHY? BECAUSE YOU WERE NOT MADE FOR 24-HOURS A DAY LEISURE. YOU WERE MADE FOR MORE THAN JUST FUN. YOU WERE MADE FOR A PURPOSE. AND GOD WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT PURPOSE SO YOU NEED TO DISCOVER WHAT IT IS. IN THIS SERIES WE'RE GOING TO UNCOVER GOD'S GRAND PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE.

ONE GUY WHO CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD HIS PURPOSE WAS PAUL IN THE BIBLE. THE BIBLE SAYS IN ACTS 20 "THE MOST IMPORTANT THING [IN OTHER WORDS, FOR HIS LIFE] IS THAT I COMPLETE MY MISSION, THE WORK THAT THE LORD JESUS GAVE ME TO TELL PEOPLE THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT GOD'S GRACE." GOD HAD A MISSION AND A WORK FOR PAUL TO DO.

GOD HAS A MISSION AND A WORK FOR YOU. A LIFE MISSION, A LIFE PURPOSE THAT HE INTENDS FOR YOU TO FULFILL WHILE YOU'RE HERE ON THIS EARTH. PART OF THE JOB OF THIS CHURCH IS TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THAT.

THESE ARE THE FIVE ESSENTIALS YOU HAVE TO HAVE TO LIVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY AND IN THIS SERIES, STARTING AFTER SUMMERS END, WE'RE GOING TO GO IN DEPTH, DRILLING DOWN IN EACH OF THESE. WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT HOW DO YOU TAP INTO GOD'S ENERGY AND POWER. WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT HOW DO YOU DEVELOP HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS THAT SUPPORT YOU. WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT HOW DO YOU BUILD YOUR LIFE ON UNCHANGING PRINCIPLES THAT LAST. AND WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT HOW DO YOU MAKE THE MOST OF THE TALENTS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU. HOW DO YOU FIND AND FULFILL THE PURPOSE THAT YOU WERE PUT ON THIS PLANET FOR.

BUT TODAY, LET ME CLOSE BY GIVING YOU THE VERY FIRST SECRET. THE SECRET OF GETTING STARTED IN ALL OF THIS IS FIRST YOU MUST GET TO KNOW GOD. YOU MUST ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM AND HIS SON CHRIST. YOU MUST GET

CONNECTED TO GOD. AND SECOND, YOU MUST GET CONNECTED TO A SPIRITUAL FAMILY, A CHURCH, WHERE YOU'RE GOING TO GET THE SUPPORT. WITHOUT THOSE TWO THINGS IN YOUR LIFE YOU CAN WRITE THIS ONE OFF. NONE OF THESE THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN IN YOUR LIFE WITHOUT A RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND A RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PEOPLE WHO WILL HELP YOU GROW IN GOD. YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE THEM BOTH.

MATTHEW 6:33 "THE THING THAT YOU SHOULD WANT MOST [CIRCLE "WANT MOST"] IS GOD'S KINGDOM AND DOING WHAT GOD WANTS [YOU SHOULD WANT MOST WHAT GOD WANTS.] THEN ALL THESE OTHER THINGS YOU NEED WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU." IF YOU WANT MOST WHAT GOD WANTS MOST FOR YOUR LIFE, THEN ALL THESE OTHER THINGS YOU NEED WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU.

THE BIBLE TELLS US IN 2 PETER 1 "JESUS HAS THE POWER OF GOD AND HIS POWER HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING WE NEED TO LIVE [THAT'S ALL THE ESSENTIALS OF LIFE] AND TO SERVE GOD. AND WE HAVE THESE THINGS BECAUSE WE KNOW HIM." IT STARTS BY GETTING TO KNOW CHRIST. IF YOU'VE NOT GOTTEN TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST, YOU NEED TO DO THAT. GET CONNECTED.