

# Discovering Your Life Purpose

# BEFORE YOU BEGIN

## WHAT IS YOUR LIFE PURPOSE?

Before you enter this adventure, let me offer you a challenge: In the box below write what you feel your life purpose is.

If you couldn't come up with much don't worry. The large majority of people I talk to have no idea what their purpose is, or are very vague about it.

Do you think that knowing your purpose in life is very important? If you are like most people you answered a resounding **YES** to that question.

## THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A PURPOSE

The idea of having a clear purpose is compelling to all of us. Which of us isn't stirred when the Captain of the Starship Enterprise states their purpose as:

"...it's continuing mission is to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life forms and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before."

We are all attracted to those who are driven by a clear purpose, a definite mission.

It is burning within all of us to know and live out a purpose, a mission. In a recent Newsweek article 3 of the top 10 concerns of youth dealt with knowing their purpose in life. Also, the famous psychologist Abraham Maslow, in his research of the effects of purpose in people's lives, concluded that both the quality and quantity of life were affected by a person's sense of purpose. Could not having a clear purpose in life be the cause of so many people hitting the skids when they enter mid-life? They climbed the ladder of success only to find the ladder was up against the wrong building. They did things right, but were they doing the right things?

## YOU WERE CREATED FOR A PURPOSE!

The truth of the matter is this: that you were created by God to live out a distinct and unique purpose, a mission. Before you were even created God had in mind for you to fulfill a mission. Let me offer some Scriptural examples of this timeless truth. Jesus, John the Baptist and Jeremiah all had a mission laid out for them by God long before they were born.

### **1. Jesus would have a mission in life in Matthew 1:21:**

"...he will save his people from their sins."

**2. John the Baptist's mission in Luke 1:16-17 would be:**

"to bring many of the people of Israel back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous to make a people prepared for the Lord."

**3. The Lord told Jeremiah his inborn purpose in Jeremiah 1:5:**

"before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

All three had a purpose laid out before they were even born. Wouldn't it stand to reason then, that the Lord laid out a purpose for your life long before you were born? All of us were born for a specific purpose and thus, we all long to know what our created purpose is.

## **OUR LIFE PURPOSE LIVED OUT WILL HAVE AN IMPACT**

We all desire for our lives to leave a mark on this world. There are a couple of individuals in Scripture who had a clear statement of purpose and because they lived according to it their lives made an indelible impression.

**In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus gives his life purpose statement:**

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

If you look at the life of Christ you will notice that everything he did flowed out of this life purpose statement, thus his life had an impact, it was meaningful, and was fulfilling. How about Paul the Apostle?

**In Colossians 2:2 Paul states his mission:**

"My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ."

Notice that he ordered his life around this mission by being a pastor, an author, a missionary, a discipler, etc. He did nothing that didn't emanate from his life purpose, thus he had a life that made an impact, was meaningful, and was fulfilling. Now the question is, do you think God wants you to experience a life that makes an impact, is meaningful, and is fulfilling? Of course he does! Thus, if you were to discover your life purpose and live according to it, like Jesus and Paul, you too could experience a life that will make a unique difference.

## **PROBLEM: ARE GOALS A PURPOSE?**

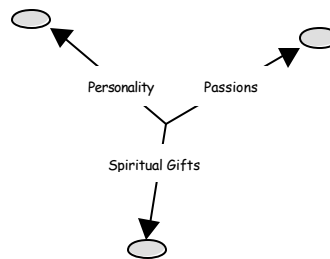
Why do so many people accomplish all their goals and still feel so empty? It seems they set goals intended to increase their satisfaction with life only to find that they have become tyrannized by them. Most people define their purpose in life by the goals they set; their purpose flows out of their goals. For example, a college student may say that her "purpose" is to raise two children to be happy, healthy, contributing members of society. What happens though when the kids grow up and move out of the house? She becomes despondent because she feels like her purpose is over. She defined her purpose by a goal. A goal is attainable and will come to an end. In contrast, a purpose will never come to an end and will last your whole life long. Thinking back to Paul's life purpose, did he see everyone become encouraged? Was everyone united in love? Did everyone come to know Christ? Obviously the answer is no. His purpose lasted his whole life. Your purpose also will continue till the day you die.

## DISCOVERING YOUR LIFE PURPOSE

The challenge then is to discover your life purpose. Because God created you, it is not something you will design for yourself, it is something you discover. In Job 10:8 it declares "your hands shaped me and made me." When God created you He made you very special. In Ephesians 2:10 it states that "...we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus..." The word workmanship is the Greek word that indicated a masterpiece created by a master artist. So, if God designed you as a masterpiece wouldn't it be true that if we looked at how he created you we would come up with why He created you, your purpose? If we were to take a clock apart and examine how it was made, we probably would discover that its purpose is to tell time. So, in a sense let's take you apart and examine how you were made in order to find your unique purpose.

Scripture teaches that God has planted within all Christians PASSIONS; special burdens, dreams, or visions that move them to action. In addition to this, He has given all Christians SPIRITUAL GIFTS, especially endowed abilities which equip them to act effectively and productively in the lives of others. God has also given each of his children a unique PERSONALITY, a special way of dealing with ideas, events, and people.

Most people struggle with a problem that could be characterized by this illustration.



The personality, spiritual gifts, and passions heading off into different pursuits, activities or goals, and thus producing much activity without impact. In reality, because God is the master artist, when He created you He actually intertwined all three areas, so that all three could head in the same direction, in order that you would make the greatest impact possible.



As you move through this packet, you will see the relationship between all three areas. It will most likely be very eye opening to you.

This life purpose packet has been designed to assist you in understanding how God created you, and thus what your unique purpose is. My hope is that as you discover your life purpose, you would be excited to catch a vision for living it out to the maximum potential, thus making a significant difference in this world!

# DISCOVERING YOUR UNIQUE PERSONALITY STRENGTHS

God created you as a one of a kind creation. You are very different than others. Your personality then would be very unique. This survey will help you to discover your unique personality. Circle as many words as you like that you feel best describe who you are. Don't circle what you think you should be or want to be but what you ARE!

<p><b>L</b></p> <p>Takes charge Assertive Bold Enterprising Decision-maker Goal driven Enjoys challenges Determined Firm Purposeful Competitive Leader Self-reliant Adventurous</p>	<p><b>G</b></p> <p>Loyal Even keel Enjoys routine Good listener Sympathetic Nurturing Tolerant Non-demanding Avoids conflict Dislikes change Adaptable Thoughtful Patient Deep Relationships</p>
<p><b>O</b></p> <p>Takes risks Motivator Fun loving Very verbal Enjoys change Group oriented Avoids detail Visionary Energetic Likes variety Promoter Creative Mixes easily Optimistic</p>	<p><b>B</b></p> <p>Deliberate Reserved Practical Factual Detailed Inquisitive Persistent Controlled Predictable Orderly Discerning Analytical Precise Scheduled</p>

Now, add up the number in each box, multiply it by two, and write the number in the box. The numbers which are the highest are your dominant personality types. We all have a bend of each type, but one or two will usually stand out. Now, look at the next page to get a further description of your personality type.

# DISCOVERING YOUR UNIQUE PERSONALITY STRENGTHS

Everyone is a blend of each of the basic personality types, however usually one or two will predominate in a person's everyday actions.

## **L = IF YOU'RE A LION...**

You'll have a natural tendency to:

- Gravitate to positions of leadership
- Be decisive and quick on making decisions
- Avoid "chit-chat" and want to "get to the point"
- Have the time orientation of, "Let's do it now!"
- May not realize the impact of your words or corrections of others

## **O = IF YOU'RE AN OTTER...**

You'll have a natural tendency to:

- Make most of life fun!
- Love to talk with others
- Easily get people excited and encouraged
- Enjoy group and high activity levels
- Avoid details, close accountability and deadlines
- Have the time frame of "It'll all work out" in the future

## **G = IF YOU'RE A GOLDEN RETRIEVER...**

You'll have a natural tendency to:

- Want to go deep in your relationships
- Express tremendous loyalty to those you love
- Listen attentively (and at length) to other's problems
- Be highly sensitive to the needs of others
- Can carry the emotional burdens of others on your shoulders
- Like emotional and financial stability... even if it can mean "Peace at all costs"

## **B = IF YOU'RE A BEAVER...**

You'll have a natural tendency to:

- Want to do things "right" and "by the book"
- Strive for accuracy and quality, not quickness
- Look at a person's past as a key to trusting them in the future
- Want clearly defined tasks, limited risk, and an "open door" environment for asking clarification questions
- Can be very creative in designing helpful systems if encouraged and allowed to work at your own pace
- Are so good at taking things apart, they can also take people apart and become strong critics when wronged

# CONTRATULATIONS! YOU ARE GIFTED!

Each believer is given spiritual gifts to build up others in the body of Christ. The three major lists of gifts are found in Romans 12:3-8, 1 Cor. 12:1-11, 27-31, and Eph. 4:11-12. Here are four steps to help you find your spiritual gifts.

## EXPERIMENT:

Sometimes the only way to know if God has gifted you in a certain area is to try out the gift. You will never know you have the gift of teaching unless you try to teach.

## EXAMINE YOUR FEELINGS:

Your feelings are very important! If you experiment with a certain gift and feel very embarrassed or uncomfortable, then perhaps you do not have the gift (at this time). On the other hand, if you were to experiment with another gift and found that you received personal joy, satisfaction, and felt used by God then you most likely have that gift.

## EVALUATE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS:

Ask yourself these questions: "Am I effective?" "Am I having a worthwhile impact on these people?" "Is God using me in this particular area?" Remember God has given everyone a gift that will be effective.

## EXPECT CONFIRMATION FROM THE BODY OF CHRIST:

Other Christians should be encouraging or discouraging you (with love) in what you do. Listen to them. Weigh their input against your response to the questions in step three. The body of Christ is designed to help its members. Find a significant person or group of people in your life who will help you understand and confirm your gifts.

With these four steps in mind, read through the description of the gifts and check yes, perhaps or I doubt it. Remember, no one has all the gifts and there are no ungifted Christians. Do not underestimate how God has gifted you!

## I. "SPEAKING" GIFTS

- A. **Pastor:** The ability to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers and to equip them for ministry.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- B. **Teaching:** The ability to clearly communicate biblical information in a relevant way so that others will learn, be built up, and equipped for ministry.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- C. **Prophecy:** The ability to receive and communicate an immediate message from God to his people so that they may be comforted or challenged.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT

- D. **Evangelism:** The ability to share the good news of Jesus Christ to unbelievers in such a way that they respond with faith in Christ.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- E. **Encouragement:** The ability to minister words of comfort, counsel, or challenge so that others are motivated to apply and act on biblical principles, as well as, develop their potential in Christ.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- F. **Wisdom:** The ability to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may be best applied to specific needs arising in the body of Christ.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- G. **Knowledge:** The ability to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas which are pertinent to the growth and well being of the body.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- H. **Missionary:** The ability to adapt to a second culture and minister whatever gifts they have in order to reach unbelievers and help believers from that culture.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- I. **Apostle:** The ability to start new churches and oversee their development.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- J. **Discernment:** The ability to know with assurance whether certain behavior alleged to be of God is in reality divine, human or Satanic.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- K. **Tongues:** The ability to pray or worship God in a language that is unknown to the speaker.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- L. **Interpretation:** The ability to make known to others the prayer of the one speaking in tongues.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT

## II. "SERVING" GIFTS

- A. **Service:** The ability to identify the unmet needs in the church family and to make use of available resources to meet those needs practically, quickly, and with no need for recognition.  
 YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT

- B. **Mercy:** The ability to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems, and to provide compassionate and cheerful support.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- C. **Giving:** The ability to contribute material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- D. **Leadership:** The ability set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that attracts and gets others involved to work together to accomplish these goals.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- E. **Helps:** The ability to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of their members of the body, thus enabling those others to increase the effectiveness of their own spiritual gifts.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- F. **Administration:** The ability to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the body of Christ and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of these goals.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- G. **Hospitality:** The ability to make others, especially strangers, feel warmly welcomed, accepted and comfortable in the church or in their home.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- H. **Healing:** The ability to sense God's prompting to pray for those who need physical, emotional, or spiritual healing and see God answer.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- I. **Miracles:** The ability to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that are perceived by observers to have altered the ordinary course of nature.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- J. **Intercession:** The ability to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent and specified answers to their prayers, to degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT
- K. **Faith:** The ability to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for his work.
- YES       PERHAPS       I DOUBT IT

# UNVEILING YOUR PERSONAL PASSIONS

Your passion will lead you to compelling action. Your passion for a certain group of people or area is part of God's way of directing you to where you can best use your spiritual gifts.

The following questions can help you identify and state your passion. Assume that money, time, and abilities are not an issue. Follow your dream...

## 1. I PREFER TO WORK WITH:

Things	People
Information	Other

## 2. I AM ATTRACTED TO AND HAVE THE GREATEST CONCERN FOR:

Infants	Adults
Children	Singles
Junior High	Couples
High School	Elderly
College	Other
Young adults	

## 3. MY DEEPEST DESIRE IS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE FOLLOWING AREA:

Global concerns	Politics
Secular society	Economics
Church	Other

## 4. IF MONEY, TIME, FAMILY OR EDUCATION WERE NOT AN ISSUE, AND I KNEW I COULD NOT FAIL I WOULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

## 5. IF I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN ONE AREA WITH THE INVESTMENT OF MY LIFE IT WOULD BE:

6. THE THING THAT GETS ME THE MOST EXCITED IS:

7. THE THING THAT BREAKS MY HEART MOST IS:

8. WHAT DO YOU LOVE TO DO - WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEND ALL YOUR TIME DOING IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE?

9. IF I WERE TO ASK MY FRIENDS WHAT THEY SEE ME DOING WITH MY LIFE THEY'D SAY:

10. WHO ARE YOUR HEROES - WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU ADMIRE IN OTHERS?

11. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE PEOPLE TO SAY ABOUT YOU LONG AFTER YOU HAVE PASSED AWAY?

# LIFE PURPOSE STATEMENT

Now let's begin to put all the pieces together. Look at the previous pages and transfer onto this page what you've discovered.

## PERSONALITY

Lion

Otter

Golden Retriever

Beaver

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Speaking Gifts

Serving Gifts

## PASSIONS

Summarize here what you discovered. Notice the major themes that keep reoccurring.

Notice first how your personality relates to your gifts. Now notice how your gifts relate to your passions. Do you see the relationship between the three? Most always there is an intertwining between the three areas.

Now you will need some time to pull all three areas together, as this is the very essence of how God created you. **Write a one-sentence statement** that combines all three areas; this will be your life purpose statement. This will be a first draft and may be somewhat rough, but you can take more time later to refine your statement.

## MY LIFE PURPOSE IS...

The test of the value and effectiveness of a life purpose statement is: "does this statement inspire me?"

# IMPLEMENTING YOUR LIFE PURPOSE

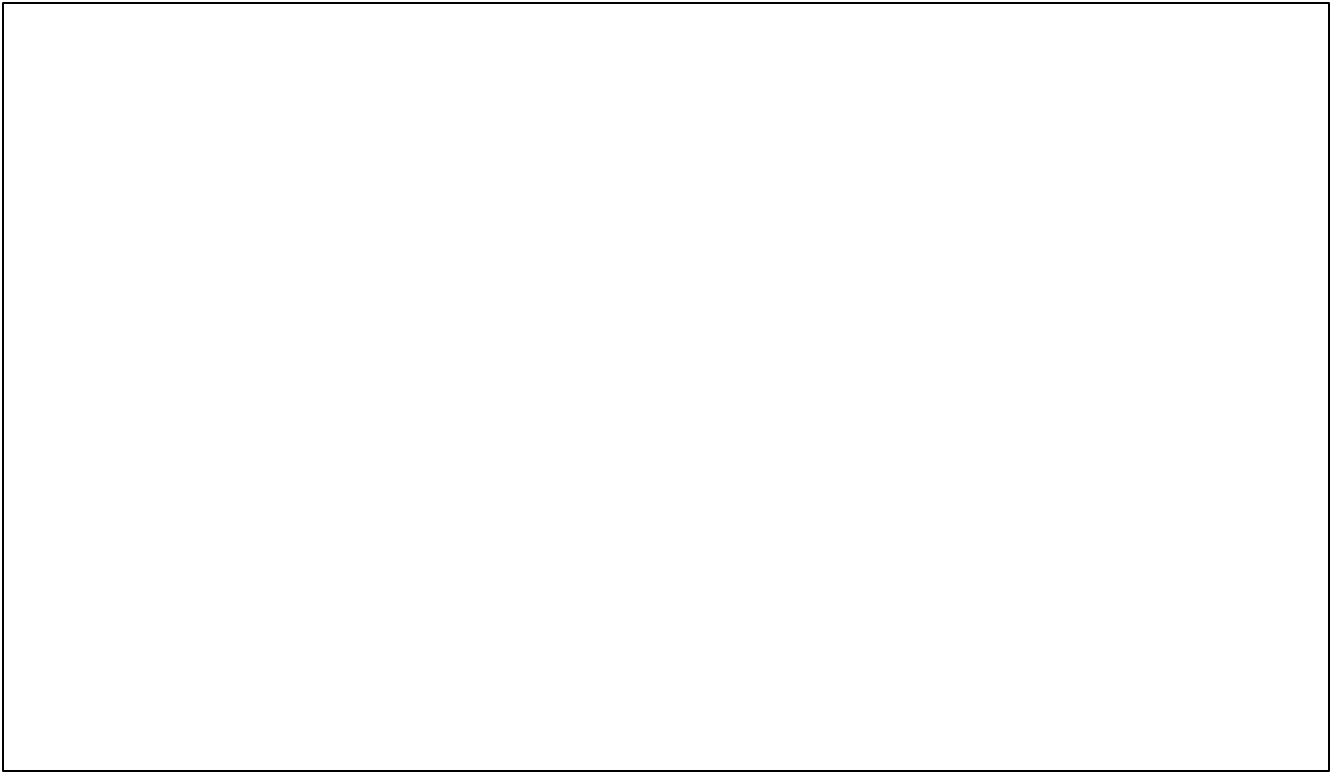
Now that you have discovered your life purpose it is **vital** that you begin to brainstorm different methods to fulfill your mission. For examples, what methods did Paul the Apostle implement to fulfill his mission? Well, he was a missionary, a discipler, a pastor, and an author; all of which flowed out of his personal mission. Can you think of anything that he did that did not spring from his life purpose? Not likely. The result is that his life made a huge impact, so much so that we are still feeling the effects of his impact today. In the same way, as you determine different methods in which you can fulfill your life purpose, and then live them out, you will make a significant impact on your world.

Many methods are simple and you can implement them today. But, some methods could actually be a full-time job. And knowing that God has given you this mission, would it not make sense to devote your life to fulfilling your life purpose to the fullest possible extend? This then would require a certain amount of education and experience to prepare you fully to be on the cutting edge of excellence in living out your mission.

The ball is in your court now. You can leave your mission here on paper and forget about it, or you can choose to implement your mission through a variety of methods you can choose from. Here are some examples:

MISSION (what I'll do)	METHODS (how I'll do it)
<p>"I desire to challenge and encourage others through my music; to believe in those who do not believe in themselves and to bring out the very best in them."</p> <p>Because I have a passion for children, I desire, through love, support and encouragement to set an example for kids to look up to in order to be a positive role model that encourages kids to seek God and lead a godly life."</p> <p>"Because I believe in youth, I desire to reach out to them by my skills, gifts and encouragement to bring them to the kingdom of God and then disciple them and be there according to God's will."</p>	<p>Worship leader Write music Performer Mentor</p> <p>Teacher Mother Orphanage work Youth Worker Children's hospital</p> <p>Youth pastor Surf coach Teacher Camp counselor Missionary</p>

LIST DIFFERENT METHODS IN WHICH YOU COULD FULFILL YOUR LIFE PURPOSE.



I hope you will maximize on your potential and go for it in living out your mission to the fullest possible extent. There is **no one** on this earth who has the same mission, thus there are certain people only **you** can touch in your own special way. I encourage and challenge you to launch out knowing that your life will make a unique and powerful difference in the lives of others.

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