

EXCERPTS FROM *PATHWAY TO PURPOSE™ FOR WOMEN*

By Katie Brazelton, Ph.D.

Longing for Purpose

The ease of my life did nothing to lessen the immeasurable sadness of the divorce. My heart was broken and I was lonely. Fewer neighborhood kids tracked through my new, tiny house, and no couples invited me to join their outings. After a few bad experiences, I chose not to date. So I lived a quiet and simple life shared with several faithful friends, my Bible, and my new best friend, *TV Guide*.

With no pressing roles to fulfill, I felt enormously dispirited and useless. Everything I had crowded into my life to bring some semblance of meaning to it had been yanked away, minimized, or grown stagnant. My friends noticed that I seemed to be lost, but those who knew me best knew that I was crashing into hopelessness.

The pain of that transition and my intense lack of purpose were made worse by the fact that for five years I had begged God to give me a Joan-of-Arc-quality cause or a unique purpose to champion, but he had not seen fit to do so. I felt confused. At times I wondered if the only logical life purpose I had left was shopping for new clothes because my weight spiraled downward as my depression deepened.

It has been more than a decade and a half since those difficult days, and God has given me more meaning in life than I ever could have imagined. In the midst of that purposeless desert, I began an intense spiritual journey through which God slowly revealed to me his multifaceted reasons for my existence. Today, my service as a licensed minister at Saddleback Church and as a Certified Christian LifePlanner™ [LifePlan™ Facilitator] allow me the privilege of walking alongside other women who are crying out for purpose in their lives.

I will share a bit more of my journey on the pathway to purpose shortly, but now, let me ask about you. How are you doing in the area of personal validity and life significance? Are you crying out to the Lord for clarity regarding his purposes for your life?

Finding Purpose Day by Day

My kids and I searched for a new church that would give us a fresh start. God orchestrated that I would begin attending Saddleback Church. I knew I had come home when Pastor Rick [Warren] began talking about God's purposes for the church and our lives. As he got to know me better, he once said that I, like many others, needed a regular purpose-transfusion to keep functioning!

And today, thanks to God speaking through my pastor, I can get my daily supply of purpose. I learned that my God-given purposes are the same as yours. God designed each one of us to connect with others, know and become more like Christ, serve in ministry, complete our life mission, and glorify him with our life. My clearer understanding of those purposes has recalibrated every aspect of my life, including why it is such an honor to invest in my daily roles, why it is so important for me to mature spiritually, and what God is revealing to me about my unique purpose on earth.

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Discovering God in the Ordinary

I believe that even in the midst of your ordinary routine, God reveals hints about what he's called you to do. The Bible tells us that "God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other," so God has already blessed you with spiritual gifts, skills, talents and natural abilities. Whether you are able to teach, lead, feed, draw, sing, build, analyze, research, motivate, organize, write, or something else, God will provide opportunities to use those gifts to further his kingdom. That's why Scripture admonishes us to use our gifts in accordance with the grace God has given us.

Your daily roles are incredible opportunities for you to use your natural and spiritual giftedness to help your family, friends, and neighbors learn about and become more like Christ. God breathed those traits into you purposefully to help you share his message in your everyday world. When your heart is working in concert with God's current roles for your life, you may even begin to hear yourself, say, "Life is good. I've never had such a sense of fulfillment. Thank you, Lord, for giving me such important tasks. How have I found such favor with you?"

Unwrapping God's Gift of Passion (73)

Regardless of what your passion is, God gave you the gift of passion and made you his steward of it. So I have a question of you: Why not go ahead and live with the desires and purpose your Creator intended? God wants to use every part of you, including the passions he chose for you and stirs within you. He wants your passion to be alive and well and available to him whenever he want sot use it for his purposes. Perhaps now is the time to take the step that will replace drudgery and apathy with an unquenchable zest for life.

This is the first step we've taken on the pathway to purpose that can compare to soaring on wings like eagles. It is the opportunity of a lifetime to dance, laugh, play, and experiment with what makes your pulse race. When you fully embrace this step and understand that God has placed good desires in your heart, it can wipe away the indecision and fear about unintentionally embarking on a mission that is not God-ordained. It answers the nagging questions like: Why would God allow me, a serious sinner, to do what I love doing? What if God doesn't approve of my deepest desires? What if I'm supposed to be doing something I dislike rather than doing this fun assignment?

But even more important, taking this step will stir up your hunger for God. As you evaluate the desires of your heart, you will recognize him as your heart's most passionate desire. You will fall in love with him more deeply. When you understand that God, who knit you together in your mother's womb, also placed his desires for you in your heart, it will remind you of his magnificent investment in you. That alone will cause you to worship him, thank him, and desire him and his purposes all the more.

All excerpts from
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