



LESSON 2 – PURPOSE: UNDERSTANDING YOUR PURPOSE

Ephesians 2:8-10

REVIEW

1. **Assignment:** Okay, who did their homework? Let's hear from a few of you ... what did people say when you asked them about your strengths?
2. **I AM GIFTED BY GOD!** (Say it with me one more time!)
3. Three foundational truths from last week:
 - You already have at least one spiritual gift
 - Spiritual gifts come in all shapes and sizes
 - Your gifts aren't about you ... they're about others

Today we're talking about PURPOSE. Last week we discovered that you have gifts. This week we're figuring out WHY you have them and WHAT they're for. This is where it gets really good. Grab your Bible and turn with me to ***Ephesians 2:8-10***.

YOU WERE MADE ON PURPOSE FOR A PURPOSE

Raise your hand if you've ever had one of those moments where you thought, "What am I even doing with my life? What's the point of all this?"

Yeah, me too. We all have. And here's the crazy thing ... people have been asking that question since the beginning of time. Philosophers write books about it. Celebrities give TED talks about it. People spend thousands of dollars on therapy trying to figure it out.

But here's what I love about being a Christian: We don't have to wonder. God already told us. It's right here in ***Ephesians 2:8-10***:

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For **we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**"*

Can we just pause on **verse 10** for a second? Because this verse is loaded with purpose.

- **"We are His workmanship"** - The Greek word there is *poiema*. You know what English word comes from that? Poem. You are God's poetry. You're His masterpiece. His work of art. God didn't slap you together like a rushed science project the night before it's due. He crafted you. Designed you. Formed you with intention.

- **"Created in Christ Jesus for good works"** - You weren't created randomly. You were created FOR something. With a purpose. On purpose.
- **"Which God prepared beforehand"** - Before you were born, before you took your first breath, God already had assignments lined up with your name on them. He pre-loaded your purpose into your DNA.
- **"That we should walk in them"** - Walk. Not run frantically trying to figure it out. Not stress out wondering if you're missing it. Walk. One step at a time. Gods already prepared the path ... your job is to walk it out.

Let me say it again: **You were made on purpose for a purpose.**

You are not an accident. You're not a cosmic coincidence. You're not here just to pay bills and die. God made you intentionally, gifted you specifically, and has assignments waiting for you that only you can accomplish.

THE BIG WHY

So, let's get to the big question: **WHY did God give you spiritual gifts?** Think about it. God could have accomplished His purposes any way He wanted. He could have sent angels to do all the work. He could have just spoken things into existence like He did in creation.

Instead, He chose to work through us. Through imperfect, messed-up, still-figuring-it-out people. Why? Here are three reasons your gifts matter:

1. YOUR GIFTS REVEAL GOD'S NATURE TO THE WORLD

When you operate in your spiritual gifts, you're not just helping people ... you're showing them what God is like:

- When someone with the **gift of mercy** shows compassion to a hurting person, they're revealing God's heart for the broken.
- When someone with the **gift of teaching** explains Scripture clearly, they're revealing God's desire for people to know truth.
- When someone with the **gift of giving** meets a need, they're revealing God's provision.
- When someone with the **gift of encouragement** lifts a discouraged person, they're revealing God's faithfulness.

Your gifts are like windows into God's character. People might never read the Bible, but they'll read your life. And when they see you operating in your gifts, they get a glimpse of who God really is.

Jesus said it in **John 13:35: "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."** Your gifts, used in love, become proof that God is real and that He cares.

2. YOUR GIFTS COMPLETE THE BODY OF CHRIST

Paul uses the analogy of a body in **1 Corinthians 12**. He says the church is like a body ... and every part is essential. You can't have a body that's all mouth. You can't have a body that's all hands. You need eyes, ears, feet, fingers ... every part working together.

Here's what that means practically: **When you don't use your gifts, the body is incomplete.**

It's like trying to play a song on a piano when half the keys are broken. You can still make music, but it's not what it's supposed to be. When you're not functioning in your gifts, something's missing. Someone's not getting blessed. Some ministry's not happening. Some needs are not being met. You're not optional. You're essential.

I love how **Romans 12:4-5** paints a picture: ***"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."***

You belong to each other. Your gifts aren't just for you ... they're for all of us. And when you discover your gifts and start using them, the whole body gets healthier.

3. YOUR GIFTS FULFILL YOUR PERSONAL DESTINY

This is the one that gets me fired up. You ready for this? **You will never be fully satisfied in life until you're operating in your gifts.**

You can have all the money in the world, all the success, all the Instagram followers ... but if you're not walking in your God-given purpose, something inside you will always feel empty.

It's like putting diesel in a car that runs on unleaded. The car might look good sitting in the driveway, but it's not going to run right. You were designed to run on purpose. And when you discover your gifts and start using them, it's like everything clicks into place.

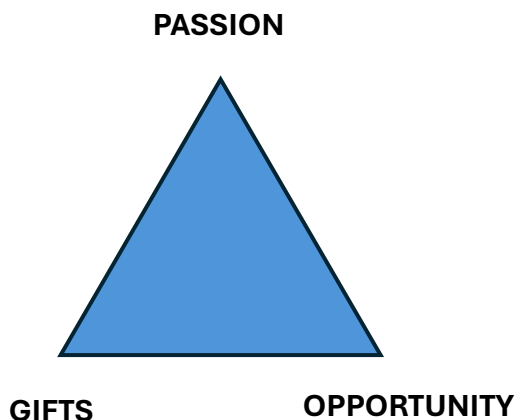
Myles Munroe said, *"The wealthiest place on earth is not the oil fields of the Middle East or the gold mines of South Africa. The wealthiest place is the graveyard. There you will find inventions that were never created, songs that were never sung, books that were never written, and dreams that never came to pass."*

Don't let your gifts die with you. Don't go to your grave with your music still inside you. God put those gifts in you for a reason ... use them!

DISCOVERING YOUR SPECIFIC PURPOSE

Okay, so we know we were made on purpose for a purpose. But how do we figure out what OUR specific purpose is?

Great question. Let me give you a framework. I call it the **PURPOSE TRIANGLE**. There are three points, and when they all line up, that's your sweet spot.



Point 1: PASSION - What makes your heart beat faster?

God doesn't just give you gifts randomly. He connects them to your passions. What breaks your heart? What fires you up? What makes you want to jump out of bed in the morning?

- Maybe you see homeless people, and you can't just walk by ... you have to do something.
- Maybe you see kids who don't know Jesus, and it wrecks you.
- Maybe you see broken families and you think, "Someone needs to help them."
- Maybe you see people who are sick, and you feel compelled to pray for them.

That's not random. That passion is a clue to your purpose. God puts a burden in your heart for the things He's called you to address.

Nehemiah had a burden for the walls of Jerusalem. When he heard they were broken down, he wept and fasted. That burden became his assignment. He went back and rebuilt those walls.

What's your burden? What keeps you up at night? What issue, what group of people, what problem do you care about more than most people do? Pay attention to that.

Point 2: GIFTS - What has God equipped you to do?

Your passion points you in the right direction. Your gifts equip you to actually do something about it.

Let's say you have a passion for hurting people. That's great! But you will approach it depending on the gift in which you operate...

- If you have the **gift of mercy**, you're probably going to minister to them one-on-one, sitting with them, listening, praying.
- If you have the **gift of leadership**, you might start an organization to help them.
- If you have the **gift of giving**, you'll fund ministries that serve them.

Same passion. Different gifts. Different expressions.

This is why it's so important to know your gifts! Your passion without your gifts leads to frustration. You care, but you don't know how to help. Your gifts without passion leads to burnout. You're capable, but you don't really care.

But when passion and gifts line up? Kingdom Purpose is Ignited.

Point 3: OPPORTUNITY - Where is the door open?

You can have passion and gifts, but if there's no opportunity, you're stuck. Purpose happens where your passion and gifts meet an actual need.

Paul talked about this in **1 Corinthians 16:9**: *"For a great and effective door has opened to me."* He recognized opportunity when he saw it.

- Sometimes **the opportunity is right in front of you**. Like, you have the gift of teaching and you're passionate about kids, and guess what? The children's ministry needs help. Boom. That's your door.
- Other times, **you have to create the opportunity**. You see a need that nobody's addressing, and you think, "I could do something about that." So you start something.

Don't wait for the perfect opportunity to fall in your lap. You might need to step out in faith and watch God open doors as you walk.

When all three points of the triangle line up ... passion, gifts, and opportunity ... **that's your purpose zone**. That's where you come alive. That's where you make the biggest impact.

THE DANGER OF COMPARISON

One of the biggest things that keeps people from walking in their purpose is comparison. You look at someone else's gifts and think, "Man, I wish I could do that." You see someone else's ministry and think, "Why can't I have that kind of impact?" You're so busy wishing you were someone else that you forget to be who God made you to be.

Let me tell you a story from the Bible. In **John 21**, Jesus is talking to Peter about his future. He tells Peter how he's going to die ... which, not gonna lie, is kind of a heavy conversation. Peter looks over and sees John and asks Jesus, "What about him? What's going to happen to him?"

And Jesus basically says, *"That's none of your business. You follow Me."* Ouch. But true. Your assignment is your assignment. Their assignment is their assignment. Stop looking sideways. Look up.

Theodore Roosevelt said, *"Comparison is the thief of joy."* And I would add ... comparison is also the thief of purpose.

You know why?

- Because when you're busy comparing, you're not creating.
- When you're envying someone else's gifts, you're neglecting your own.
- When you're wishing you had their platform, you're ignoring the one God gave you.

God didn't make you to be them. He made you to be you. And the world doesn't need another them ... it needs the original you.

YOUR PURPOSE IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

Here's something that's going to blow your mind: Your purpose isn't just about what you accomplish in your lifetime. It's about what you set in motion for generations to come.

Look at ***Psalm 78:4-7***:

"We will not hide them from their children, TELLING TO THE GENERATION TO COME the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done... that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments."

When you walk in your purpose, you're not just impacting today ... you're impacting tomorrow. You're creating a legacy. You're showing the next generation what it looks like to live on purpose.

Maybe you think, "I'm just serving in the nursery. Is that really a big deal?" **YES.**

- Because you're showing those babies ... and their parents ... that they matter to God.
- You're creating a safe place for families to worship.
- Your part of the reason some parent might come back next week and eventually give their life to Jesus.

Maybe you think, "I'm just greeting people at the door. That's not a spiritual gift." **WRONG.**

Hospitality is absolutely a spiritual gift. And you might be the first smiling face someone sees after the worst week of their life. Your kindness might be the thing that makes them think, "Maybe there's hope. Maybe God cares."

Never underestimate what God can do through your obedience in the small things.

THE STORY OF DAVID AND GOLIATH ... A NEW ANGLE

Everybody knows the story of David and Goliath. Little shepherd boy defeats giant warrior. Classic underdog story, right?

But let me show you something you might have missed. David wasn't just randomly good with a slingshot. He'd been using it for years as a shepherd, protecting his sheep from lions and bears. That was his gift ... he was accurate, focused, and skilled with that sling.

But he also had a passion ... he couldn't stand seeing God's people mocked. When he heard Goliath taunting Israel, something rose up in him. ***"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"***

And there was an opportunity ... nobody else was willing to fight. Passion. Gift. Opportunity.

David stepped into his purpose that day. But here's what's crazy ... he was probably 17 years old. A teenager! He could have thought, "I'm too young. I'm not qualified. I'm just a shepherd kid. Let the real soldiers handle this."

But he didn't. He recognized his **gifts**, he followed his **passion**, and he took the **opportunity**. And the whole nation was delivered because one kid decided to walk in his purpose.

What giant is God calling you to face? What Goliath is standing in front of you, mocking you, telling you you're not enough? Maybe it's fear. Maybe it's insecurity. Maybe it's the voice in your head that says, "You don't have anything to offer."

That's a lie. And it's time to pick up your slingshot ... your gifts ... and take that giant down.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO DISCOVERING YOUR PURPOSE

Let's get practical. How do you actually discover your specific purpose? Here are five steps:

STEP 1: PRAY AND ASK GOD

Seems obvious, right? But how many of us actually do it? ***James 1:5*** says, ***"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally."***

Pray something like this: "God, show me why You made me. Reveal my gifts. Help me see what You see when You look at me. Guide me to my purpose." And then listen. God speaks. He might speak through His Word, through other people, through circumstances, through that still small voice in your spirit. But He will speak.

STEP 2: LOOK AT YOUR PAST EXPERIENCES

What have you been through? What have you overcome? Often, your greatest pain becomes your greatest ministry.

- If you've walked through depression and came out the other side, you can help others who are struggling.
- If you've overcome addiction, you can mentor people who are fighting that same battle.
- If you've been through a divorce and found healing, you can offer hope to others in that valley.

Don't waste your pain. Let God redeem it by using it to help others.

STEP 3: PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT ENERGIZES YOU

When do you feel most alive? What kind of serving makes you lose track of time because you're so into it?

If you're teaching a Bible study and three hours feels like thirty minutes, that's a clue. If you're serving at a soup kitchen and you leave feeling more filled up than when you came, that's a clue. If you're praying for people and you feel the presence of God so strong you could stay there all night, that's a clue.

Energy is a gift from God. Pay attention to what gives you energy versus what drains you.

STEP 4: ASK TRUSTED PEOPLE

That's why I gave you that assignment last week! Other people often see gifts in us that we don't see in ourselves.

Ask your spouse, your close friends, your small group, your pastor: "What do you see in me? Where do you think I could make the biggest impact?"

Listen to their answers. Don't dismiss them. They might be seeing something God wants you to see.

STEP 5: EXPERIMENT

You don't discover your gifts by sitting on the couch thinking about it. You discover them by trying stuff.

Volunteer in different ministries. Serve in different capacities. Step out of your comfort zone. Try teaching a class. Try serving in hospitality. Try working with kids. Try helping with administration.

Some things you'll try and think, "Nope. Not my thing." That's okay! That's how you narrow it down. Other things you'll try and think, "Whoa. I could do this forever." Bingo. You just found a clue.

DISCOVERY EXERCISE #2: THE PURPOSE ASSESSMENT

Grab your student manual. For the next 10 minutes, work through these questions. Be brutally honest. No one's watching:

1. **PASSION CHECK:** If you could solve one problem in the world and money wasn't an issue, what would it be?
2. **GIFT CHECK:** Looking at the spiritual gifts list from last week, which 3-5 gifts do you think you might have? (It's okay to guess!)
3. **EXPERIENCE CHECK:** What's the hardest thing you've been through that God brought you out of? How could that experience help someone else?
4. **ENERGY CHECK:** When have you served others and felt more energized afterward, not drained?
5. **FEEDBACK CHECK:** Based on the interviews you did this week, what themes did you hear? What did multiple people say about you?
6. **OPPORTUNITY CHECK:** What need do you see around you that keeps bothering you ... like, "Why isn't someone doing something about that?"

SPIRITUAL GIFTS QUOTES

Circle the quote that speaks to you and write why it matters:

"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why." - Mark Twain

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"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive." - Howard Thurman

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"You are not here merely to make a living. You are here to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, and with a finer spirit of hope and achievement." - Woodrow Wilson

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"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

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"God created you on purpose for a purpose." - Rick Warren

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"Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God." - Leo Buscaglia

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"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." - Pablo Picasso

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"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how." - Friedrich Nietzsche

ASSIGNMENT

Here's your assignment for this week ... and I'm going to warn you, it's going to stretch you.

I want you to serve somewhere you've never served before. Pick a ministry in the church you've never tried. Maybe it's greeting. Maybe it's kids ministry. Maybe it's helping set up chairs. Maybe it's praying for people after service.

Whatever it is, step outside your normal and try something new. Just once. See how it feels. See if God shows up in a new way.

Write down your experience:

- What did you do?
- How did it feel?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Could you see yourself doing this long-term?

Bring your notes back next week. We're going to use them as we keep narrowing down your purpose. This is going to be fun. Let's go!

Resource Credits

1. Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Life*. Zondervan, 2002.
2. Munroe, Myles. *In Pursuit of Purpose*. Destiny Image, 1992.
3. Hybels, Bill. *Holy Discontent*. Zondervan, 2007.
4. Stanley, Andy. *Visioneering*. Multnomah Books, 1999.
5. Lucado, Max. *Cure for the Common Life*. Thomas Nelson, 2005.

Next Week: LESSON 3 - PLACEMENT (Finding Your Place in Ministry)

