Finding Hope in Hard Times
“Hope for Your Purpose”
(Part 7)
May 30 &31, 2009
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Intro: Video: Purpose of Life
• How each of us answer this question is going to determine the amount of hope we will experience in this life. Not all purposes produce hope!
• Lasting hope is the result of experiencing and walking in God’s purpose for our lives. Too many people think it is found in chasing after their own purpose. (Be happy) This is why there is such hopelessness and unhappiness. Our purposes simply cannot produce the hope we so desperately long for. BUT, God’s purposes do!
• Let me give you 6 essentials for experiencing hope through God’s purposes for your life. There are 3 core beliefs and 3 key actions that result in hope.

I. I Am Created For God’s Purpose
Eph. 2:10 “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (NLT)
1. God has a purpose for every person to discover…a destiny that is unique only to you! Notice what this verse says, “so we can do the good things He planned for us to do long ago…” God has pre-ordained things for you to do…for you to discover!
2. Think about the hope this produces! Your life is NOT some random act or accident of reproduction. God knew you before you were born! He knew about your life on planet earth. Therefore He assigned purpose to your life before you even existed.
3. You may feel that you have a meaningless job…One that certainly doesn’t fulfill your internal need for purpose. I’ve had a few of those over the years. (cleaning chicken houses / dog food processing / )
4. Sometimes we can even attach our self-esteem to our meaningless jobs. We begin to feel Meaningless / and hopeless because we look at what we do 8-10 hours a day and conclude this is who we are. Don’t do it!
5. God says He created you for His purpose. What you get paid for in this life may not be the most exciting thing in the world. That’s OK. God didn’t expect you to get all your purpose from that. He has something much better for you to discover!
• Hope begins by believing what God says about you!

II. I Am Designed For God’s Purpose
Ps. 139:14 “Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.” (NLT)
1. God didn’t design you in a random fashion. He is a God of purpose. Therefore, He
designed you with His purposes in mind. He fashioned you in a unique way so that you
could accomplish all His plans for your life!
2. We live in a world that is constantly telling us that we don’t measure up. Telling us
we’re not good enough / not talented enough / don’t look good enough / not smart
enough / pointing out the flaws in our design.
3. God tells us just the opposite! I love the way you’re designed because I made you this
way on purpose! The world may not value what I put in you but in my Kingdom, you
fit perfectly into my plans!
4. God made your heart a certain way. There are some things your heart is passionate for
and others it is not. That’s God! God put certain abilities and talents in you. He made
you with a very specific personality type that He wanted you to have. He also has
allowed you to have specific experiences that have helped shape you.
• Then, combined with all of this, He put a spiritual gift inside you for His purposes.
I Cor. 12:4-7 “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of
them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in
different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to
each of us so we can help each other.” (NLT)
5. God put within you an ability to serve His purposes in a unique way. All of these
factors working together help make up our specific design by God. As we come to
better understand our own unique design, it helps us accept ourselves and pursue
purposes that fit who we are.
6. I used to really struggle embracing the fact that God wanted me to be a pastor because I
looked at my design and concluded I didn’t fit. I didn’t think I had “The Pastor design”.
7. Form always determines function. (Explain – illustrate with fishing poles) You were
uniquely designed for specific purposes of God! Hope results from living in a way
consistent with your design!

III. I Am Empowered For God’s Purpose
Phil. 4:13 “I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything
and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in
Christ's sufficiency].” (Amplified)
1. Not only are we created for purpose and designed for purpose; God then empowers us to
fulfill His purpose. I love the phrase, “who infuses inner strength into me.” We don’t
accomplish God’s purpose in our own strength, we get to tap into His strength.
2. God has Kingdom power for those who pursue Kingdom purposes. I have heard so
many people over the years complain about not experiencing God’s supernatural power.
The reason is that God’s power is reserved for His purposes NOT ours.
3. God infuses us with inner strength as we align our lives with His will for our lives. Too
many people are waiting to “feel powerful” before ever attempting anything for God. It
doesn’t work this way! Power is the result of being where God wants you to be.
4. We must believe this power is available. We are spiritually wired for it. God doesn’t
reserve this power for a few select individuals. It is available for everyone for follows God’s purpose for their lives.

- **Illustrate:** Show D battery and a 220 plug. When you gave your life to Jesus, your wiring changed! Now, you are wired for power! Stop thinking so small!

5. God has set us up to succeed not fail! You are created to overcome. All the elements of victory are within you. You must believe what God has said about you. If we refuse to believe these truths, we will never discover the hope of walking in our purpose! Belief is a choice NOT a feeling. Therefore, let’s choose to believe!

- Let’s say these three beliefs out loud together. (Slide)

- These three core beliefs will produce three essential behaviors. Walking in these actions will produce hope. WHY? Because you will be fulfilling God’s purpose for your life.

### IV. I Will Pursue God’s Purpose

*I Cor. 9:25-27* “All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. **So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should...**” (NLT)

1. There has to come a time in our relationship with Jesus where we stop pretending (shadowboxing) and get into the ring and embrace the purpose for which we were created. We start living with purpose in every step.
2. So what does this look like? How do I begin to purposely pursue God’s plans for my life?

- **Get involved in service:** There are so many places for you to begin serving – share – Stop waiting to find th perfect place to serve. Get serving and God will direct you! It’s always easier to steer something moving then when it’s sitting still!
- **Listen to the Godly desires of your heart:** God will put desires in your heart and mind that just excite you / scare you / surprise you – They will be consistent with His Kingdom
- **Listen to other godly people speak into your life:** Allow other people to point out gifts / abilities / even potential you don’t see.
- **Be willing to be stretched / take risks / in order to pursue God’s purpose for your life.** Remember, God is not taking you in a direction that you can accomplish. He is taking you in a direction that is impossible without Him.
3. If you are currently involved in a ministry and you are bored, you are resisting God calling you to move ahead trusting Him with more. You’re playing it safe…starting to shadowbox again. Time to risk!
4. Some of you have been sitting in the chair long enough. It is time for you to get involved. Some of you have been serving long enough in your boredom. It’s time to take the next step! This is where hope is discovered! What are you waiting for?

### V. I Will Endure God’s Purpose
Heb. 10:35-36 “So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God’s will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.” (NLT)

1. Experiencing the hope that comes from our purpose will be impossible without endurance. God’s promises are realized only as we make up our minds to NOT quit as things get tough. There’s no hope in quitting.

2. As glorious as serving God’s Kingdom purposes are, they are not easy. Walking in your destiny is not an easy road. There are plenty of distractions / roadblocks and pitfalls along the way. Plenty of opportunities to throw in the towel.

3. One of the key reasons we have such a hard time enduring is that we don’t take into account the necessity of Heb. 12.

Heb. 12:1 “…let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.” (NLT)

4. Endurance is the result of being willing to strip off excess weight and laying aside sin that trips us up. In other words, we just have too much extra weight upon our lives as we are trying to pursue God’s agenda. We are weighed down and worn out by the extra baggage we carry.

5. Our unwillingness to strip off unnecessary weight is the reason we can’t endure. We get tripped up / bogged down / over stressed / over worked / and then we quit. What is unnecessary weight?

- Schedules that are too full.
The only way to endure is to choose to simplify your life. We must quit trying to make God’s purposes just one more thing in our already overbooked busy day and routine. We must stop trying to fit God into our schedules and allow God to dictate our schedules. Be willing to cut some things out. (No to the Good Vs. Yes to the Best) Busyness is one of the greatest evils of our day! Produces hopelessness!

- Behaviors / attitudes / habits left over from our old life.
We must be willing to leave behind sinful ways that will continue to trip us up as we try to pursue God’s purposes. These could be issues of unforgiveness / pride / materialism / control issues / Whatever it is, God will show you what is holding you back. The important thing is, when He does, will you leave it behind?

6. Hope is experienced as we run after God’s purposes with endurance, refusing to quit until we attain the final stage.

VI. I Will Fulfill God’s Purpose
Col. 4:17 “And say to Archippus, See that you discharge carefully [the duties of] the ministry and fulfill the stewardship which you have received in the Lord.” (NLT)

1. Will we just dabble in God’s purposes or will we embrace the stewardship we have been entrusted with and live with one goal...to fulfill the purposes of God for which we were created?
Acts 13:36 “For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep;…” (NIV) What a great epitaph for how to live our lives! We fulfilled the purposes of God in our own generation and then went to be with Jesus! That’s hope!

2. Some of you know that I enjoy reading the obituaries in the newspaper. I realize some of you think this is a bit morbid. BUT, I like to read about a person’s life. What is said about a person at the end of their lives is pretty significant. Here is a summary of who they were / what they valued / how they lived. It speaks volumes!

3. Some of them are tragic / some are sad / some are funny / others are inspiring. It’s the inspiring ones I look for. Those rare individuals who figured out what life was really all about and then lived that way until the end. That’s hope and that’s the way I want to live.

4. Ever think about what others will say about you when you’re gone? Ever wonder what God would say about you? What if God wrote your obituary? What would He say about the purposes for which you lived your life?

5. I don’t want to dabble in the purposes of God. I want to be obsessed with them. What is true individually is also true corporately. We are a church with a destiny; with a purpose entrusted to us by the hand of God. Since God brought you to this church, you are here to be a part of what God is doing. Our destiny’s are intertwined.

6. God put it upon my heart years ago that He wanted a church to be sold out to His common vision for a geographic area; get as many people as possible to believe that vision and commit to it; then we all grow old together chasing after God’s purposes together! We fulfill the purposes of God in our generation! This is hope!

7. You have a purpose from God to fulfill right here. Are you willing to walk in it until it is completed?

Hope is the result of walking in God’s purpose for your life. The question is, will you?

Let’s say these 6 essentials together. For some, this is a declaration for you on how you are going to live your life. Maybe there needs to be some changes. Maybe you’re tired of your hopelessness. Today you can change purposes. If so, then let this be a turning point.

(Slide)
1. I am created for God’s purpose
2. I am designed for God’s purpose
3. I am empowered for God’s purpose
4. I will pursue God’s purpose
5. I will endure God’s purpose
6. I will fulfill God’s purpose