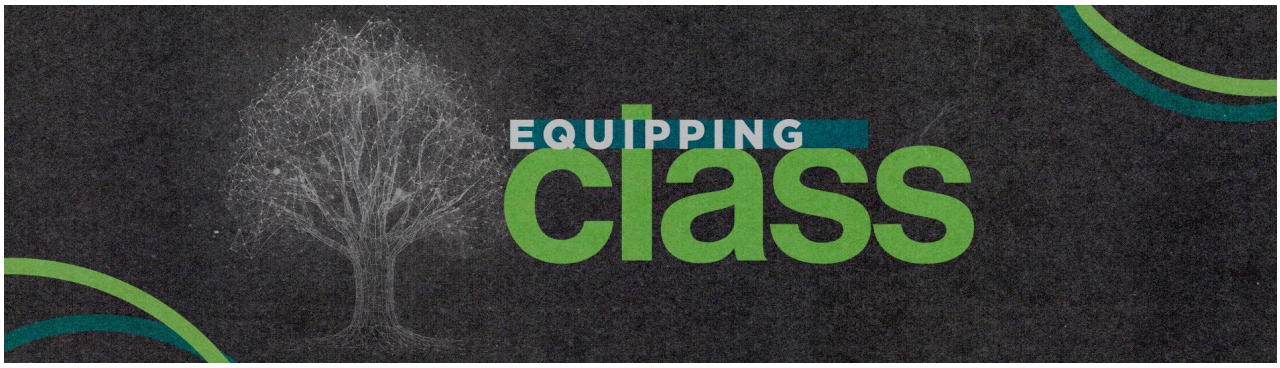


Your Story, God's Purpose

Ed Lutz and Sam Jang | October 18, 2026

Introduction

We are called to live on mission for Jesus Christ - to be his witnesses here, near, and far (Acts 1:8). We are "green dots" that God wants to place all over the world! A key to us fulfilling our mission is first to know how God has gifted us. As we more fully understand our story and spiritual gifting, we will experience joy as we serve Christ wherever he calls us.

The Lord, through his abiding and empowering of the Holy Spirit, has gifted you for the building up of the church and the mission of God. This week we want you to reflect upon your own story and, specifically, the path God has led you down to get you to this point. God uses both positive and negative events, influences, and people to prepare you to be effective in the work to which he has called you. Where your life story and spiritual gifting intersect people often call "the divine intersection." God has been writing your story even before you became a Christian, and all that has come to shape you to this point (events, personality, skills, talents, interactions, etc.) is your "story." And God wants to redeem all of it and empower you with his Holy Spirit for Kingdom work.

Commentary

You will have an opportunity to share in your table time a brief summary of the key events, influences, and people God has orchestrated to bring you to where you are today. Know that you won't be able to share all that you can due to the nature of a small group, so take the time here, with this document, to reflect on God's work in your life. As an example, let's take a look at Joseph's story, and then reflect on your own life.

<u>A SURVEY OF JOSEPH'S STORY</u>

- Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob, by his favored wife, Rachel.
- Joseph was favored by Jacob because he had been born to him at an old age, by his favored wife, and Jacob made an ornate robe for Joseph (Genesis 37:3).
- This caused Joseph's half-brothers to hate him (Genesis 37:4).
- God gave prophetic visions through his dreams, showing that one day Joseph would rule over his family (Genesis 37:5–11).
- This caused jealousy of Joseph's brothers to reach its peak as they plotted to kill him in the wilderness. Instead, they decided to make Joseph appear dead by dipping the

robe in goat's blood to deceive Jacob, and sold Joseph into slavery instead (Genesis 37:18–35).
- Joseph ends up becoming a servant in the house of a high-ranking Egyptian named Potiphar (Genesis 39).
- Joseph was a faithful servant, who excelled at his duties, and was made a chief servant in charge of Potiphar's household.
- God looked favorably on Joseph and allowed him to prosper in everything he did.

  Key Verse: Through Joseph, *"the blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field"* (Genesis 39:6).

- Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Joseph on a regular basis, which Joseph consistently refused because he wanted to honor his human master Potiphar, but more importantly, to honor God (Genesis 39:9).
- Potiphar's wife falsely accuses Joseph, and Potiphar puts him in prison (Genesis 39:7–20).
- In jail, Joseph was again blessed by God, where the keeper of the prison puts Joseph in charge of all the prisoners.

  Key Verses: *"(T)he Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison"* (Genesis 39:21–23).

- Joseph interprets the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners. Both interpretations proved to be true, and one of the men was later released from jail and restored to his position as the king's cupbearer (Genesis 40:1–23).
- But the cupbearer forgot about Joseph and failed to speak to Pharaoh about him.
- Two years later, the king himself had troubling dreams, and the cupbearer remembered Joseph's gift of interpretation. The king summoned Joseph, and Joseph was able to correctly interpret his dreams (Genesis 41:1–37).
- For his wisdom, Joseph was made a ruler in Egypt, second only to the king. Joseph was in charge of managing food during the years of plenty and selling it to Egyptians and foreigners alike during the years of famine (Genesis 41:38–57).

What were the key events in Joseph's story?
- Brothers **betrayed** him and sold him into slavery.
- Potiphar's wife **falsely accused** him, where he ended up going to **jail unjustly**.
- The cupbearer **forgot** about him.

An important question we should ask is how did these key events influence Joseph?

Joseph's fear of the Lord (Proverbs 9:10): Joseph resists the temptation of Potiphar's wife. When we sin, we sin first and foremost against God (Psalm 51:4). Only God holds the authority and power to forgive sins and to restore us. We go to God because only God can forgive our sins (Mark 2:7).

Joseph's faith in the Lord (Galatians 2:20): Through faith, Joseph was able to recognize God's sovereignty and blessings in his life despite his circumstances. Joseph's reverence toward God reinforced his faith in that his identity rested entirely in God, rather than in the surrounding circumstances. Therefore, God was able to work in Joseph's life, growing his wisdom and readying him for a larger purpose through these hardships.

How does God work in Joseph's life according to his key events?

- The **blessing** of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field (Genesis 39:6).
- Joseph was again blessed by God, where the keeper of the prison puts Joseph **in charge of all** the prisoners (Genesis 39:21–23).
- God gave Joseph a valuable **gift** of prophecy and dream interpretation. Joseph used this gift many times, eventually using it to save empires and nations. God blesses Joseph, and that blessing goes forth to multitudes of tribes and nations. God uses Joseph to **preserve** the lineage of Abraham for the purpose of fulfilling his Covenant.

Takeaway

Every person is equipped by God for his purpose. Recognize our gifting and calling, where our story matches our gifting, leads to a clear, purpose-driven life.

What is Joseph's life purpose statement?

- God used Joseph's difficult circumstances to grow his wisdom and to prepare him to exercise authority over the nations. Joseph was faithful to God, even when under the authority of others unjustly; God, in turn, grants authority to Joseph to oversee others justly.
- Joseph's wisdom and humility before God are evident in his purpose statement. When Joseph reveals himself to his brothers in Genesis 45, he could have used his authority to exact retribution for the unjust treatment he endured from his brothers. Instead, this is what he says:

  Key Verses: "And **God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive** for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 45:7–8).

  Key Verse: **God sent Joseph to save the lives** of both Egyptians and Israelites (Genesis 45:5).

  Key Verse: Genesis 50:20 — Joseph says, "As for you (talking to his brothers), you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, **to bring it about that many people should be kept alive**, as they are today."

  Remember..."And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Personal Reflection & Sharing

1. Preparation happens in both ordinary days and in intentional ways. Fill in the Chart by identifying the more significant items for each column. These have occurred throughout your lifetime, though the gift(s) of the Spirit was given to you when you came to faith and Christ (and also affirmed by others).

   Consider what places/experiences have you traveled to or seen that have **broken your heart**, and what places/experiences/people brought you **immense joy** and have been life-giving?

Key Events	**Key People**	**Recurring Themes or Lessons Learned**	**Skills/Strengths**

2. Circle those terms that seem to be primary descriptors or recurring items that are reflective in who you are today.

3. Attempt to craft a single sentence - or two - that incorporates those terms and also address your spiritual gift.

Sample: "God has given me a **passion** to **create ministry** opportunities for people and then **teach** and **train** them to flourish in them."

Note on Spiritual Gifting:
We encourage you to take The Real You (https://therealyou.org) spiritual gifts assessment. It'll take approximately 15 minutes; then read through the results. Clearly, no assessment is 100% accurate, and as you serve Christ others will be able to affirm your gifting. But as a way of offering insights and opportunities, this tool may prove helpful. Additionally, Kristine (knickols@highlandschurch.org) would love to help you find how to use your gifts here at Highlands.