



Our Purpose: Knowing God's Role For Us

1 Corinthians 12-13 | Kevin Yule

Introduction: Two weeks ago you learned how God uniquely gifted you through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit who lives within you. And your spiritual gifts (cf. 1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12, Eph. 4, 1 Pet. 4) are designed to build up others as we collectively glorify God and live out the gospel. Then last week you reflected on your personal story and the pathway God has led you down to this point in your life. The entirety of your life, the positive and negative experiences, influences, and people, have gotten you here. They do not define you; our identity is in Christ alone (2 Cor. 5:17). But they do play a key part in knowing how God wants you to best serve him with your life. We call the point where your personal story and spiritual gifting meet “the divine intersection,” or the awareness of how God is leading you to live your life for him. This is what we mean by knowing your “role” in God’s Kingdom work.

Commentary. God redeemed Paul’s life story. Paul was an advanced student in Judaism trained by a top teacher, extremely zealous for tradition, an active persecutor and murderer of Jesus followers, an expert in the law, raised in the city, a Roman citizen, well connected, and a leader. That past, or pathway, was part of God’s bigger purpose Paul. Throughout the apostle Paul’s life, God created intersections between Paul and other people. These people would help support, grow, or accelerate God’s purpose in Paul’s life. For example, right after Paul was saved God used a man named Ananias to meet Paul at a critical point to help Paul better understand Jesus and grow in his new faith. Then Paul goes to Damascus and meets Barnabas, whom God uses to open the door for Paul to be invited into his first major ministry assignment in Antioch. And this was the start of a lifelong assignment of gospel ministry. Another example in the Bible is Mordecai, who was a foreigner (Jew) and found favor with the king. His favor positioned Esther (also a foreigner), and she found favor with the king. God positioned them to save the Jews. Can you identify an example in our own life where a decision/position led to an eventual God-ordained opportunity? What might God be preparing next for you? Be in prayer and be open for God to use you.

Aim to Finish. Part of your life stewardship is to finish the assignment God has given to you. Have you thought about what it will be like when you appear before Jesus at the end of your life and he says, “What have you done with what I gave you?” God cares about how you steward the life he has entrusted to you. Have an aim, or a goal, to finish well like Paul said Acts 20:24; it will help you live today with focus. Second Timothy 4:6-8 tells you that God is not impressed that you simply know what your life call is. He wants you to do it (cf. Matt. 25:14-30). Paul’s only aim was to finish the assignment God gave him (cf. Acts 20:24).

Personal Reflection:

1. Do you know what your life calling is? Why might you be unclear? Age? Lack of life experiences? Newness in Christ? The first step is personal surrender to Christ and an openness to do whatever he wants you to do wherever that may be. Ask God to give you the ability to trust him completely in all things (Prov. 3:5-6). Our love for God's purposes must be greater than the pursuit of our own.
2. Second, how has God intersected you with others to accelerate His purposes? Make a list of important people in your life. Write down how they have impacted your life. Reflect on the growth, skills, values, and opportunities that may have come about from each relationship.
3. Third, how has God redeemed your life, skills, or story and incorporated them in your life purpose? Is there an area of your life you can invite God to redeem, perhaps a past event or influence that might be painful or something that does not seem to have much value prior to now?
4. When did you feel most aligned in God's calling for your life?
5. Has the pursuit of your assignment been disrupted by circumstances that you could not control? What gets in the way now? What would recalibration look like?
6. Make a list of strengths, experiences, spiritual gifts, with descriptions (if possible) of how God has redeemed and repurposed them for His mission. Reflect on what themes stand out.
7. Based on what you know today, what do you think God's assignment for you might be? Can you write it in a succinct sentence? Your life assignment ought to be such that it has applications in whatever season of life you are in. An example would be, "God has designed me with a passion to create ministry opportunities and then to build, teach, train, and empower leaders to take ownership so they can flourish." (*Note: this life assignment has key words that emerged from the spiritual gift assessment in week 1 and incorporates many aspects of a personal life story.*)

Final Thought. Discovering your purpose and living it out is a lifelong journey with God. Pray for God to give you clarity on your role, to encourage you, and reveal your next step. Keep seeking Him. Like Jesus said to the first disciples, "Follow Him." As you do, you will discover the life God has for you. God uses your story and the gifts he has entrusted to you through his Spirit to accomplish his purpose. It may take you years, but stay faithful and complete the task God has for you. Finish strong.