

ON PURPOSE

GOD BLESSES ON PURPOSE

On Purpose | *Talent* | Eric Parks | 1.28.17

LG Weekly

START .

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

Did you ever have to participate in a talent show? If so, do you remember what you did?

SHARE .

Welcome to our series "On Purpose."

God blesses with a purpose. What we have in life was given to us for a reason. Think for a moment about what God has given to you (besides a relationship with Him, which is the best thing). He has given each of us time, abilities, and resources that we get to choose how to use.

There is a purpose behind the blessing of time. God has granted us a window of time to walk upon this earth, to get to know Him better, and to make an impact with our lives. We can 'on purpose' use our time for things that matter, or we can choose to waste it away.

There is a purpose behind the talents and abilities you have. You have been hard-wired with abilities that are unique and special. For some, abilities to teach, discern, write, paint, design, create music ... for others, abilities to devour books, make money, run companies or excel in sports. These are all God-given, and He allows us to choose whether we use those abilities to build His kingdom or our own kingdoms.

Finally, we have been blessed, 'on purpose,' with resources. It can sometimes be difficult to see that our

resources are God-given, but when we really think about it, how did we earn those resources? The answer is: by our God-given talents, abilities, and time! Through these, God made us able and capable to earn a living, which enables us to purchase the things we enjoy. When we look around at what we own - our homes, cars, bank accounts, bikes, boats, furniture, etc.; these are amazing things that we get to steward. It's our prerogative to choose if and how we purposefully bless others with what we have been given. We can open our homes, pick people up in our cars, bike with others, or give away things someone else might need. We can honor God in giving our resources toward building His Kingdom, or we can hoard them for ourselves. It is our choice.

Talent. When we hear that word, the majority of us don't think, "that's me!" Most of us hear that and we think about other people ... songwriters, actors, sculptors, motivational speakers, best-selling authors, artists, and professional athletes. Are they talented? Sure, but no more influential than any one of us reading this who have God's Spirit living inside of us. We just get easily confused by what the world tells us is important and what God finds important. If you are a follower of Jesus, you have been wired by God to do things that the person next to you can't do (1 Corinthians 12:7). We all have a talent that no one else on the team has. You have a significant part to play in the body of Christ, which we call 'the church.' Before Jesus ascended, he looked at his disciples and entrusted them with the great commandment to simply 'go.'

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

God has not only wired us specially, but has also given us a mission that we are to use our talents to impact the world around us. As Eric mentioned in the message, we all have been placed by God in the family we are in, the city we live in, the job we have and that gives us access to people and places that only we have.

If you heard Eric's message, you may have already thought of your "three people." Think about three people God has given you access to who you might be able to encourage, serve, and tell about Jesus. If you're comfortable sharing, who comes to mind?

When you think about the people who came to mind, what stops you from reaching out to them?

G R O W

In the message this week, Eric talked about the bleachers of life and that we sit in a section and are surrounded by people that only we have access to. In light of the great commission, we get to be a part of God's redemption story. God wants to use you and your specific wiring to make an impact in someone's life. Whether it is a family member, the person in the cubicle or desk next to you, your doctor, mechanic, neighbor or gas station attendant, you have an opportunity.

So how do we practically reach out to people? Of course we pray and ask God to open doors. That is the first thing anyone of us should do. But, when that door opens, then what?

Eric talked about four practical steps we can take:

- ✓ **Connect:** it doesn't really matter how you do it, but take the lead and be intentional about crossing paths. (Mark 5:19)
- ✓ **Look:** for where God is at work already. Expect for God to show you an opportunity to be used by him in a conversation or situation. (Lamentations 3:25)
- ✓ **Ready:** be ready to step up and use your God-given wiring to take a risk, make an ask, go to the hospital, listen, help or invite them to church. (Genesis 28:16)
- ✓ **Go:** Jesus asked us to go and make disciples. We make it an act of our will to go and trust that God will use us. (Matthew 28:18-20)

We are not responsible to God for the souls that are saved, but we are responsible for the Gospel that is preached, and for the way in which we preach it.

~Charles Spurgeon

In Blomberg, C. (1992). *Matthew* (Vol. 22, p. 431) he helps us understand that the main task of the believer is to duplicate themselves wherever they may be:

The main command of Christ's commission is "make disciples" (*mathēteusate*). Too much and too little have often been made of this observation. Too much is made of it when the disciples' "going" is overly subordinated, so that Jesus' charge is to proselytize merely where one is. Matthew frequently uses "go" as an introductory circumstantial participle that is rightly translated as coordinate to the main verb— here "Go and make" (cf. 2:8; 9:13; 11:4; 17:27; 28:7). Too little is made of it when all attention is centered on the command to "go," as in countless appeals for missionary candidates, so that foreign missions are elevated to a higher status of Christian service than other forms of spiritual activity. To "make disciples

of all nations” does require many people to leave their homelands, but Jesus’ main focus remains on the task of all believers to duplicate themselves wherever they may be. The verb “make disciples” also commands a kind of evangelism that does not stop after someone makes a profession of faith. The truly subordinate participles in v. 19 explain what making disciples involves: “baptizing” them and “teaching” them obedience to all of Jesus’ commandments. The first of these will be a once-for-all, decisive initiation into Christian community. The second proves a perennially incomplete, life-long task.

Making disciples is a life-long task. As believers, we are to be in a discipleship relationship and to be actively helping disciple someone else. It is spending time with someone further along who is investing in your life and modeling what it looks like to live like Jesus. It is each of us spending time and investing in someone who is looking to grow in their walk with Jesus. Discipleship is ongoing, challenging, messy at times, but develops us to become more like Jesus.

God wired all of us. How do you think your unique gifting could be really helpful in reaching others or discipling someone else?

When you think of discipleship, what comes to mind or what fears come to mind?

Considering the four practical steps, can you give some examples or ideas for each one listed below?

- *Connecting intentionally*
- *Looking for where God is at work*
- *Being ready to step up*
- *Going and trusting God*

M O V E

We can have all the practical steps in the world, but we all need courage to be able to deliver when the moment comes to act. Even Paul, one of the boldest proclaimers of the gospel, faced moments where he needed courage to speak when God asked him. He pleaded with the church in Ephesus to pray for him, “And don’t forget to pray for me. Pray that I’ll know what to say and have the courage to say it at the right time...” (Ephesians 6:19) If Paul needed courage, then so do we.

We have these opportunities, these moments that present themselves where we can be used by God to make a difference in the lives of people we have influence with. Let’s pray for the courage to be intentional.

As we conclude this study, think of someone who has made a huge impact in your spiritual life. Were they intentional? Did they prayerfully look for opportunities to challenge you? Think about how life might have been different if that person hadn't been obedient to God's promptings.

Has there been someone who made a tremendous impact in your life and took time to disciple you? If so, who and how has it changed your life?

Are you currently being discipled by anyone? Have you actively tried to meet with people who could help you grow closer to Christ?

Lastly, are you currently investing in anyone to help them grow in their relationship with Jesus?

Pray about starting a Life Group: *One of our values within groups is 'multiplication.' We believe that healthy things grow and that there will come times when we are called to step out and lead. If you have been a part of a great life group for a good while, but want to continue growing in your walk with God, leading a group will stretch you. It helps you grow and provides a place for people who are looking for friendship and to grow in their relationship with Jesus. Pray about it!*

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

T O G O

Psalm 18:32-34

...the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.