

Discipleship Groups — Level 7

WEEK 6 | Women

Life Check: Purpose

Welcome back to the last week of Discipleship Groups. We've been taking our time over the last several weeks doing what it says in 2 Corinthians 13:5 NIV, *"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves."* We have taken this scripture seriously and have been enduring an incredible process of allowing the Lord to transform our hearts. We have tested ourselves regarding our identity, our emotional life, our influence, our spirituality, and our character which now brings us to one key question, what is our purpose? What are we created for?

To help us discover the answer to this question let's look at Ephesians 2:10 (NLT). The apostle Paul writes, *"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."* WE ARE GOD'S MASTERPIECE. Isn't that amazing? God, the Master Artist, the one who paints the most beautiful sunsets; The Master Composer, who composed 150 Psalms; The Master Builder, who built the Heavens and the Earth; the Master Writer who wrote the Bible, the greatest story ever told. THAT GOD, the Creator of the universe, has miraculously given us life and has intricately designed each of us for a divine purpose!

Not only do I think of God when I think of a Master Artist, but I also think of other artists like Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Vincent van Gogh. I think of all the years it took to develop their talent, all the sketches and failed attempts that these artists had to repeatedly draw and sculpt, to eventually bring their creative vision to life. For instance, Michelangelo drew an estimated 20,000 sketches in his lifetime. He's known for his paintings in the Sistine Chapel and The Creation of Adam, along with the statue of David, his iconic marble sculpture. It is said that Michelangelo described sculpting marble as, "revealing what was already inside the stone." He would see a large piece of marble and would chisel the pieces off of it, revealing the masterpiece that he saw within it. In fact, when he was carving the David, he adapted to the flaws of the marble block; a block that was famously considered "unworkable" and rejected by other artists.

In a way that's how God has designed us. He looks at us like blocks of marble and sees within it the masterpiece that we are purposed to become. He begins the process of chiseling away the unnecessary pieces of our identity, character and emotions that don't look like Him. He sees the scars that are caused by pain and tribulation, and he works them into the finished sculpture to reveal the story of our lives. God sometimes takes a big chisel to us and other times he chips away little by little, sanding away the rough edges. This isn't an easy process, it hurts, and it challenges us but like it says in Philippians 1:6 (NLT), *"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."* God has started a good work in us and He will complete it. No matter how unworkable or rejected we may feel, we were designed for a purpose.

How do we discover our purpose? Well, it's a PROCESS. Becoming a David doesn't happen overnight. Creating a masterpiece takes time and attention to detail. We are not going to be transformed instantaneously. Although I wish I could speed up the process, I know that becoming familiar with God's sharpening and refining tools provides me with an opportunity to become more intimate with Him. Now, when I say tools, I am referring to spiritual

disciplines. As we become more willing and excited about participating in spiritual disciplines like praying, fasting, and reading our bibles, we get the chance to fall more in love with our creator, which is one of the main things we have been purposed for. In Matthew 22:37 (NLT), *“Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.”* We are purposed to love the Lord with everything inside of us. Yes, this is ultimately what all Christians are purposed to do; however, we are uniquely designed to have a personal purpose and calling.

Each of us has gifts and a purpose. Like it says in Ephesians 2, we have been CREATED in Christ Jesus for good works. God created us with gifts, talents, unique experiences, and stories. God uses everything about us to accomplish His purpose which can be expressed in the different areas of our lives—whether it’s family, work, church, community, God has positioned us to fulfill our purpose wherever we are in our lives. It isn’t about comparing our gifts, talents, or calling with others but about discovering what God has created us specifically for. Making a choice to engage in authentic quality time with the Lord, our Master Artist, helps us to identify and activate those gifts.

When I think of the women in the Bible there are several names that immediately come to my mind like Eve, Sarah, Deborah the judge, Ruth, Queen Esther, Mary the mother of Jesus. But did you know that there are over 600 women in the bible that are unnamed? They’re often mentioned as wives, daughters, widows, or women who performed a certain action, like the wise woman of Tekoa, the Shunammite woman, the woman at the well, or the woman with the issue of blood. The point I am trying to make is that it isn’t important whether these women are widely recognized or whether we remember their names, what’s important is they are God’s masterpieces and each of them had a purpose.

Now let me make one thing clear, out of all the women in the Bible, we know that none of them were perfect. God uses available vessels not pristine ones. Many times, we think, “I’m not ready,” “I’ve made way too many mistakes,” or “I’m not enough.” Truthfully, none of us are really ready, we’ve all made mistakes and we aren’t enough, but thankfully Jesus is going to lead us, He sees beyond our mistakes and His power is enough to fulfill the purpose He has for us. Even the mighty women of the Bible had weakness, challenges, and sordid pasts, BUT they were available to God. God uses people that are willing! When we humble ourselves before the Master Artist and allow Him to chisel and chip away the unnecessary and rough edges of our lives, then He forms, enables, and guides us in becoming His masterpiece. He sees us! He sees YOU! He’s looking at your slab of marble and has a vision for what He is creating you to become. He’s not going to make a mistake, and He will work with your imperfections to create a glorious piece of Kingdom artwork, you just have to trust Him in the process.

Now when I say, “a glorious piece of artwork,” I’m not talking about us being glorified. We are only glorious because the KING IS FILLED WITH GLORY. Sometimes we get it twisted and think that our purpose is meant to be grandiose, flashy and about us. We equate purpose with being the center of attention—on a stage in front of thousands, having millions of followers on social media, being visible and known, but purpose is not about public position, it’s about pursuing Jesus in whatever position we are in! Not everyone was created to make a worldwide impact, but we can be used by God to make an impact in the area of the world that we are living in; in our everyday lives, in the simple things, the little things, the hidden things that no one ever sees or talks about. Whether it’s serving, advising, supporting,

leading, guiding, working, praying, or nurturing, when we are connected to Jesus and we do these things to honor Him, then we are walking in our glorious purpose.

Okay, so what if right now, you're thinking, "I get that I have a specific purpose, but I don't really know what that is?" Maybe in this time of self-examination and reflection you find yourself questioning whether the job you have or the lifestyle choices you're making are truly part of your divine purpose. That's great! That's what we are supposed to be doing! We are examining our purpose and those are the right questions to ask. Now, I challenge you to take some time this week and close out the world. Spend some one-on-one time with Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what gifts and talents He has blessed you with and ask for more opportunities to operate in those gifts. Ask Him to reveal the areas of your life that are not aligned with His purpose and be willing to walk away from them. It might be tough, but I guarantee you won't regret it.

In fact, let's do it together. Please join me in this prayer "Heavenly Father, thank you for making me a masterpiece. Thank you for giving me gifts and talents. Help me to discover more of my kingdom purpose. Help me to be a willing vessel and to be obedient to what you are asking me to do. Chisel away the things that are not like You and transform my heart, so that the work in me is completed by the artistry of Your Master hands. In Jesus name, Amen."

Well ladies, this completes Level 7 of our discipleship classes. Thank you again for watching these videos, being vulnerable in your small groups, digging into the Word, and taking the time to examine yourselves. I pray this is just a continuation of our journey as we continue to build strong identities in Christ, as we develop healthy emotions, and choose to positively influence others. May we grow vastly as the Lord establishes solid spirituality and Christ-centered character in our lives. Finally, may God bless us with divine revelation, wisdom and understanding as we pursue our purpose in Him! Until next time, God bless.