

Finishing The Assignment

Strategy for Living on Purpose



'O Lord my God, you have performed many wonders for us. Your plans for us are too numerous to list... Then I said, "Look, I have come. As is written about me in the Scriptures: I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart.'" Psalms 40:5,7-8

When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:30

Jesus was fully aware of His earthly assignment and knew exactly what He was supposed to do at each stage of His life. Not only did He know what to do, He was very intentional about accomplishing this assignment and because He succeeded, He was able to say at the end: it is finished.

The same way Jesus had an earthly assignment, so do we. No one is here 'just because', there's a God-given assignment attached to our lives. The question is do we know what this assignment is and how to go about completing it? Otherwise, we could easily live many years without actually doing what we were designed by God to do.

This series we are looking at our assignments, recognizing what it is, what it takes to do it, and finishing well. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will guide us through this series and speak to us specifically, so we are enlightened and empowered to complete our assignments successfully.



Day 1 Knowing The Assignment

'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord . "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.' Jeremiah 29:11

God has plans for us and we know they are for good, but what do those plans look like in terms of daily living and as we go through the seasons of life? How do we know what we are supposed to be doing or not doing per time? How do we ensure we're on the right track? The wonderful thing is that God doesn't expect to be the only one that knows His plans and He is more than willing to illuminate us on this as we ask Him.

'So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will...' Colossians 1:9

We are all designed to fit the purpose for which we were created but we won't fulfil that purpose without engaging the one who made us. There's a saying that goes, "if the purpose of thing isn't known, abuse is inevitable". It's very possible to function outside of what we were designed for out of ignorance simply because we haven't engaged the One who gives the assignments in the first place.

In writing to the church in Colosse, Paul gave us very valuable insight into how to find out what God's plans are: by asking Him. We have a right to ask the Lord for complete knowledge of His will per time and in every area of our lives. It's important to know that it's not only God that has plans for us. The enemy has plans for us and we also have plans for ourselves. Faced with these three possibilities, it requires deliberate action on our part to identify and connect with God's plans. As we do so, we start to get clarity on what He is saying to us and preparing us for, so we can come into alignment with His plans.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for showing me that I have access to the knowledge of your plans for my life. I ask for grace to seek the complete knowledge of Your will per time so I remain in alignment with You.

Day 2

Equipment for the Assignment

“So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God ... to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding...” Colossians 1:9

It's one thing to know what needs to be done and another to know how to go about getting it done in the most optimal way. This is why we can't stop at asking God for the complete knowledge of His will, we also ask for the spiritual wisdom and understanding to be effective in executing His will. God doesn't set us up to fail, neither does He expect us to figure things out totally on our own. He's available to help us and guide us as we engage Him. Remember it's His purpose we are designed to work out, so it's successful execution requires partnership between both of us.

'The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.' Psalms 32:8

'And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord' Isaiah 11:2

“For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.” John 6:38

Because fulfilling our God-given assignment is a partnership between divinity and humanity, the Lord has made the Holy Spirit available to us as our Helper, to guide, instruct and empower us so we function effectively. There's a direct correlation between our relationship with the Holy Spirit and our effectiveness in completing our assignments. This is why Jesus spent so much time in fellowship with the Father as He understood this was the only way to do what was necessary during His earthly ministry. Jesus had a fixed time for His earthly ministry and so do we though our assignments will differ.

'Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.' Luke 2:52

The fact that Jesus grew in spiritual things tells us that we shouldn't expect to be perfect from day one, however we must be consistent so that we can also experience growth in the areas that matter. If Jesus needed to pray, so do we. But we must also search the Bible to understand what Jesus prayed about so we know what should form the content of our prayers.

Prayer: Lord give me the spiritual wisdom and understanding I require to be effective in my assignment and help me to grow in the areas that matter to my destiny.



Day 3

Alignment with the Assignment

“You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed and placed and purposefully planted you, so that you would go and bear fruit and keep on bearing, and that your fruit will remain and be lasting, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name [as My representative] He may give to you.” John 15:16 AMP

Here we are looking at our service to the Lord. Salvation is given freely to us because of the price Jesus paid, but as believers who have received this free gift of salvation, we have a responsibility to partner with the Lord for the expansion of His kingdom here on earth. It's in this context that we each have assignments specifically designated to us. Jesus is very specific about what He wants His representatives to do and how to go about it as we will be equipped and empowered for our assignments.

With this in mind, we can break down assignments into four key segments: general, minor, major and specific. This distinction is critical so we can be sure we're aligned with the assignment as that is what will ensure we're bearing the expected fruit. Today we're looking at the general assignment.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:19-20

“So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.” Galatians 6:9

General assignments are things all believers are called to do such as soul winning, discipling, good works, serving, etc. The mission is the same, but the methods differ based on our calling. We won't all have church-based ministries, but we're all called to serve the kingdom in the capacity we've been equipped for.

“One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.”” Acts 13:2

Some believers may have visions, hear the audible voice of God or have some kind of supernatural encounter, with instructions on their assignment, but more often than not the best way to locate your assignment is to be in the place of service. It's as we serve that the Holy Spirit begins to direct our steps into the areas of His assignment(s) for us. For instance Philip started off serving in the feeding program before becoming an evangelist (Acts 6,8). It's as we are faithful in the general that we begin to identify our majors and minors.

Prayer: Lord help me to be faithful in whatever area I serve in.



Day 4

Incomplete Assignments

“I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel...” I Corinthians 1:14, 16-17

In most pursuits in life there are majors and minors. The majors are the core reason for a pursuit and the minors are things that can be done in addition but don't carry as much weight as the majors and cannot replace them. For instance you might hire someone to act as a sales staff but the person also performs some admin functions. If the person were to focus only on the admin that person wouldn't have met the conditions of employment regardless of how well those admin functions were delivered. Similarly, we must understand what our majors and minors are so we direct our energy accurately.

Majors and minors differ from person to person, for instance we see from the verse above that baptism was Paul's minor but John the Baptist's primary assignment. Paul baptised people if the need arose, but he also understood that his major assignment was to preach the gospel. We need the Holy Spirit to help us distinguish between the two, so we don't focus on the wrong area.

“You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed and placed and purposefully planted you, so that you would go and bear fruit and keep on bearing, and that your fruit will remain and be lasting....” John 15:16 AMP

Jesus is looking for specific fruit (results) from our assignments and will reward us accordingly. These results are directly connected to our major focus area, which means that we do ourselves a great disservice if we don't take time to confirm with the Holy Spirit that we're actually on the right track. Majoring on the minors will have us ending up with incomplete assignments, short-changing ourselves and more dangerously, taking us out of alignment. Tomorrow we will look at the distinction between our majors and our specifics.

Prayer: Lord reveal to me my major area of focus so I am in perfect alignment with my assignment.

Day 5

Majors and Specifics

'Then Jesus told this story: "A man planted a fig tree in his garden and came again and again to see if there was any fruit on it, but he was always disappointed.'" Luke 13:6

There are two things we should note from the verse above. First is the tree was planted by the man in a specific location and second is that his expectations were also specific. There would have been other trees around since we're told it was a garden, but the man wouldn't have looked for figs on any tree other than a fig tree. Likewise, there are places we have been planted by the Lord and if we're not bearing the expected fruit then it's as good as not being there at all.

We are all part of the Lord's global agenda and within that agenda, each of His representatives are called to different people groups and sectors. This is why we see people like Daniel and Joseph bringing specific nations to the understanding and recognition of who God is, without having pulpit ministries, while people like Paul took over the majority of Europe and Biblical Asia by preaching. Esther was called to function from the palace in Persia, while Deborah was a judge in Israel. We all have a role to play in God's agenda, and none is greater/smaller than another. The critical thing is that we follow through on what has been assigned to us.

"Instead, they saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews." Galatians 2:7

As we continue to serve faithfully and focus on our majors, the Holy Spirit begins to finetune us even further and align us to specific areas of our assignment. Both Peter and Paul had a major assignment to preach the gospel. However, they were called to different 'nations'. Paul's major assignment was specifically to preach to Gentiles, while Peter was specifically responsible for preaching to the Jews. Had either focused on other nations, they would have been out of order based on God's assignment even though people may think they did well. We can't afford to assume we know what to do without engaging the giver of the assignment. It's by His help and direction that we align with our specifics and bear the fruit expected of us.

Prayer: Lord thank You for helping me understand there's a plan for my life. I yield to You Holy Spirit and ask that You guide me into my major and specific assignments so I bear the fruit expected of me.

Day 6

Endowments for the Assignment

'And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.' Isaiah 11:2

We said earlier that fulfilling our assignment successfully is a partnership between divinity and humanity. This means that for us to succeed by God's standards, we need to be equipped spiritually. The Holy Spirit's presence in our lives adds a supernatural element to what we do, so we don't function like ordinary beings. Jesus was equipped by the Holy Spirit to perform His earthly ministry and if Jesus needed the Holy Spirit, we certainly do as well.

The Holy Spirit gives us divine access to supernatural wisdom, understanding, direction, instructions, capacity, knowledge and much more. He also gives us the ability to fear the Lord so we don't lose sight of the values we should be upholding and demonstrating. In addition to these the Holy Spirit also gives us various gifts based on what we're called to do.

'But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:...the word of wisdom through the Spirit... the word of knowledge... faith...gifts of healings... working of miracles... prophecy... discerning of spirits... different kinds of tongues... interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.' I Corinthians 12:7-11

'Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us' Ephesians 3:20

Once the Holy Spirit is within us, He deposits an unlimited measure of gifts in us based on God's assignment for our lives. However, it's our responsibility to walk in obedience and exercise these gifts so we can tap into greater measures of what's already in us. If we choose not to exercise them, these supernatural capacities will sit dormant within us. If however we actively push for spiritual growth working with the Holy Spirit, we will see them manifest more in every aspect of our lives. One of the things we need to pray for beyond knowing our assignment is the activation of every spiritual endowment required to help us achieve success.

Prayer: Lord let everything the Holy Spirit has put in me manifest and continue to grow in increasing measure.

Day 7 Faithfulness

“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. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.” 1 Corinthians 9:26-27

It's one thing to know what to do it's another to actually do it and do it well. In Paul's life we see an example and a strategy that we can also employ in finishing our assignment: running with purpose in every step. In practical terms this means being intentional about what we do or don't do. It means being intentional about understanding where and how we're to function and then doing it faithfully.

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.” 2 Timothy 4:7

“Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica...” 2 Timothy 4:10

“Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia...” Acts 15:37-38

“Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you when you come, for he will be helpful to me in my ministry.” 2 Timothy 4:11

We have said throughout this series that success in our God-given assignment involves a partnership between divinity and humanity. We know that God will equip us, but we must also do our part and do so faithfully. We see examples in the Bible of people who started and finished well like Paul, but we also see cautionary tales of people like Demas. Demas was a co-worker with Paul who was making enough impact to be specifically mentioned as he worked with Paul on several missions. However, at a point Paul noted that Demas deserted him and the assignment. Similarly, John Mark (also called Mark) deserted Paul and Barnabas earlier, but returned and became a faithful worker. These examples show us we always have a choice to either stay true to our assignment or not. God will always do His part, may we faithfully do ours.

Prayer: Lord help me stay faithful to my assignment so I keep my part of our partnership

Day 8

Quality of Service

“The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’” Matthew 25:21

‘Good’ in this context means, upright, honourable, fulfilling the duty or service demanded. Which means in addition to being faithful, there’s a quality of service required in executing our assignment. With all He endows us with spiritually, it’s reasonable for God to expect us to serve in a manner acceptable to Him.

“Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.” Romans 12:11

“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.” 1 Corinthians 9:25

Let’s be clear on this: fulfilling our assignment will involve discipline, hard work and sacrifice on our part, but God is faithful and He is a generous rewarder. It’s important we know this upfront so when certain challenges come up, we already know what to expect. This is why we’re encouraged to take our focus off what we see or experience, but on the reward awaiting us when we complete our assignment.

“Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value.” 1 Corinthians 3:12-13

Fulfilling our assignment will involve acts of service on our part and the Bible tells us we have a choice in the quality of materials we use to serve, which primarily spring from the heart we serve with. Do we serve with complaints and grumbling in our hearts, or to be seen by specific people or for the applause of men? People may applaud activities, but God knows what we do that truly comes from a heart disposition of wanting to please Him. As always, alignment with the Holy Spirit helps us have the right heart condition that will produce service acceptable to the Lord.

Prayer: Lord help me submit to the guidance of the Holy Spirit so my service is acceptable to You.

Day 9

Love

'If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you... If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.' John 13:14-15,17

Jesus showed us what true service looked like when he washed His disciples' feet. Yes, He was their teacher, but He served them with love and humility and in doing so He gave us a template to follow as well as the blessing that comes with knowing how to serve and actually doing so.

'If you love Me, keep My commandments.' John 14:15

'And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.' I Corinthians 13:13

Love is the greatest service we can offer to God and to people and the best way to fulfill purpose. When we serve with love, we obey Jesus and demonstrate His love to those we serve. This type of love isn't about how we feel, but about what the Holy Spirit is doing through us as we give Him room to transform us. It's this transformation that enables us to love everyone, including those who are mean to us. It's because of love that we can serve without offence or resentment regardless of the actions of others. It's in serving others with God's love that we truly function as representatives of Jesus here on earth.

'... You shall love your neighbor as yourself' Romans 13:9

'By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.' John 13:35

God is looking for people He can trust to carry out His mandate and willing to surrender their lives to be a demonstration of His love for humanity. Love is a big deal in living intentionally and fulfilling God's purpose. It's this love for Jesus and those He loves that propels us to seek His will and commit to obeying Him. If we focused only on the outward activities and not on the end goal which is to demonstrate God's love to a broken and fallen world, then we would have missed it, regardless of what our record of accomplishments may look like to people.

Prayer: Lord help me yield to the transformation the Holy Spirit is working on in me so I can serve in a manner that fully reflects Your love.



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