CALLING & PURPOSE

This is probably one of the topics you have been waiting for. We are talking all about how to pray for our husband's calling and purpose. God made man to be protector, provider, and leader of a family. When situations in life come up that upset those positions, it can leave a man a bit lost, trying to figure out how he's supposed to be useful. Maybe it comes after the loss of a job, a divorce, kids leaving the house, or even just his recognition that he's getting older and time is fleeting. Maybe your husband has struggled with understanding his purpose in life for a long time.

I believe we have this wrong thinking about what our calling or purpose in life is supposed to look like. We see other people who have very defined and specific jobs or passions, and it's very clear that they are walking in their purpose. We think that our purpose is going to look like this mountain top experience or like the crescendo in a song, that it's going to be extremely easy to identify and we're gonna know it when we see it.

If there's anything that I have learned by researching this topic, it's that that is not the case at all. There are lots of promises and examples that tell us that every single one of us has a call or purpose put in our hearts by God, but the way it manifests in our lives can look totally different for each of us.

The first thing that I have learned is that God's purpose for us only truly becomes revealed when we are in alignment with Him. When we spend time with Him and allow Him access to work in and through us, that's when He will start fanning into flame that little spark that He put deep inside our hearts.

Over the course of time, because of our trauma, self-sufficiency, and independence from the Lord, we have covered it with all sorts of barriers. Think of an onion. As we grow up, sin is done to us, and we pass that on to others, we develop self-defense mechanisms, walls are put in place, and by the time we start trying to find the true meaning of life, we have 37 layers guarding that little spark. But as we walk with the Lord, surrendering our everyday life, picking up our cross, learning how to live upside-down, those layers begin to shed, and we become more authentic and genuinely loving people, thus making it possible to do what Paul told Timothy:

2 Timothy 1:6 - *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,*

We will circle back to this verse in a little bit, but I just want to set the framework that God has predestined each and every one of us with gifts and desires that are to be used to walk out His purpose for us in this life. I truly believe that purpose might look different in different seasons of life, and it might not be as crystal clear for some of us as it is for others.

This is where my husband finds himself. He even did a three-year Bible Study that was centered around finding his kingdom purpose while taking into consideration his family life, and his workplace. After three years, he may have a better understanding of the theories and principles behind his spiritual giftings, but he is still not confident on what that it looks like in real life.

We can take many spiritual gifting tests, and there are even places on the Internet where you can get a list of possible jobs or places where your spiritual gifting might be best utilized. Maybe that helps some people, but I personally think it's a sham and a false sense of security. It's like taking a secular personality test. Personally, I view personality tests as a place of bondage. (This is a bit of a soap-box issue for me so I'll try to keep it under control here.) We are supposed to walk out our sanctification which is supposed to be continually conforming us more and more to the image of Christ. If I take a personality test, it puts me in a box. We already know that words have power and so do labels. If I label myself as an INSP or an Enneagram six or a D on the disc scale, whether I like it or not, I will have a propensity to live my life from that label, which inhibits me from ever growing up, maturing from, or moving into a personality that the Lord originally designed me for.

Let me show you some biblical examples of this. Let's go to **Exodus 3:11**. This is where God is calling Moses from a burning bush to walk out a purpose that seems absolutely impossible for someone like Moses. Moses tells God multiple times that he is not qualified to do this because of what Moses believes about himself. Maybe he even thought, "well, I'm an Enneagram 5 and this sounds more like a job for a 3 or an 8," or "INFJ's arent really the 'save the people from Pharoh type." God was not taking no for an answer because He was calling Moses to do this great work in spite of the labels Moses had put on himself. Now Moses did have a speech impediment. And he used that as an excuse as to why he would not be a

good fit for the job. And I think that we can do that more often than we realize. But this is the part I want you to hear: God used him anyway. That was no longer a disability for accomplishing God's purpose. Did Moses continue to have a speech impediment? Yes. But God worked around it and it in no way inhibited God from using him in an enormous way. So whatever you or your husband think disqualifies you from God using you, you're wrong.

Now let's go to **Judges 6:15–16**. An angel of the Lord has just descended into Gideon's presence. He calls him "mighty man of valor." We talked about this phrase in week 7 when we were talking about what an "excellent" wife is. The Hebrew words for both of these adjectives is the same. In response to the angel, Gideon essentially says, "no, no, no. You have it all wrong. I'm actually small and weak. Not mighty." Look what he's doing: he is beating out wheat, but not in the way that they would normally do it. He's doing it in a wine press because he's hiding. So this angel comes over to him and describes him with words that are completely opposite of the kind of person that Gideon sees himself as, but we know Gideon goes on to become a great military leader and judge who rescues the Israelites from seven years of oppression. Pretty valorous.

Now let's go to Jeremiah.

> **Jeremiah 1:6-7** - *Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." But the Lord said to me,*
> *"Do not say, 'I am only a youth';*
> *for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,*
> *and whatever I command you, you shall speak.*

God is calling Jeremiah to prophecy to the people. Jeremiah, like Moses, is thinking, "You've got the wrong guy," and gives God his excuse that he's too young. But you know what God says? "Do not say,' I am only a youth"'.

What catches my eye about this is that God seems to be addressing the power of Jeremiah's words. What we say about ourselves subconsciously directs the actions that we take. So God is correcting that behavior when he tells him not to say that.

Think about how you have described yourself to others. What kind of labels have you given yourself? Maybe it's in reference to your personality type or number, or it describes a diagnosis or health issue or you simply refer to the "type of person you are". When we confirm these "disabilities," we are in agreement with the belief that this will never change, and it keeps us from allowing the work of the Holy Spirit to conform us to be more like Jesus in this area. We like labels because it's validating and we feel seen, known, and understood through them. That's a golden calf; the only One who can truly validate us and sees, knows, and understands us beyond what we even know about ourselves is Jesus Christ.

In all three of these examples, there was somebody to speak words of life into their self-esteem. Are you this person for other people? What about for your husband? Do you have someone in your life that does this for you? This is exactly the type of person that we need to be both for ourselves in our own mind and for the people around us. This is the type of person that speaks life into an area where the enemy has complete control over. This is the kind of stuff we need to be saying to our husbands. When somebody believes in you, you start to believe in yourself.

I love highlighting examples like these in the prayer Bibles because it gives the recipient a practical real life example to follow and to see themselves through. My prayers usually sound something like, "Thank You, Lord, for Jeremiah and his example of answering Your call even when he feels completely unqualified to do so. I pray that my husband looks at Gideon's story and sees how God can take what we view as our disqualification factor, even if it's physical, and use it for Your glory in extremely mighty ways. Wherever, whenever my husband feels he is not qualified to step into a calling or purpose that You have for him, I pray that You would remind him about Moses, Gideon, and Jeremiah and that greater are You in him, than him by himself."

Take a look at **1 Corinthians 1:26–29**. Here, Paul is explaining to the people that sure, they may not be wise according to worldly standards, nor noble by birth, nor are they powerful and strong, but God chooses what is foolish, weak, and despised to show the wise and strong that they have nothing to boast about. Paul is essentially telling them that there is nothing that they can believe about themselves that would disqualify them from being used by God.

When I asked my husband what he wanted to get out of this particular topic, he said firstly, he wanted to to be reminded that God has a purpose for everyone.

Let me first send you to **Isaiah 48:15**. This particular verse, if read alone, seems pretty encouraging for somebody wanting to be reassured that God has good plans for us. But let's look at it in context because I think it speaks into more than just that.

The Lord is not, in fact, speaking about His chosen people, but is speaking about Cyrus the Great, the Persian leader. What I love most about this verse is that it shows God's sovereignty even over people who don't believe in Him. He had purpose for King Cyrus and he used him as an instrument of deliverance.

I look at this verse as an encouragement for anybody whose husband is not walking with the Lord. We are going to talk about a lot of scripture that emphasizes the importance of being aligned with God, but let's not forget that God can use and work through even the unbelievers.

Now let's look at some scriptures that confirm we are all predestined with purpose and gifts.

> **Ephesians 1:4–5** – *even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,*

Jeremiah 1 tells us that God knew us before He formed us in the womb, and this Ephesians verse shows that as well. It tells us that our first calling is to become holy and blameless. This references our personal transformation as children of God.

Romans 8:29 also says that we were predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. This verb "to be conformed" insinuates a joint effort. This is conformity that needs our cooperation. He also explains that God's desire for us is to be the first born among many brothers. We were not saved, just for the sake of being saved. God has plans to do a in us and has zero plans to abandon us in our suffering. Our salvation was meant to be the catalyst for our transformation, and as we are being transformed, the Lord will begin to lead us in His purposes.

John 15:16 is the sober reminder that it was God that chose us and He did so not so we could simply be

on the team but so that we could bear fruit. He intends on playing every player on the team. Nobody sits the bench. There is a cause and effect in this verse that's really intriguing. When we bear fruit through our abiding in God, our prayer life is directly affected.

Here's something I learned that helped me to understand this verse just a little deeper. Back in these days, students would seek after the rabbi they wanted to sit under. So this verse shows God's upside-down kingdom once again. It was not the disciples who chose which rabbi they were to learn from, but it was God who chose them.

Now let's look at second Timothy.

> **2 Timothy 1:9** – *who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,*

The reason we are all predestined with a purpose placed in our hearts is because God has His own purpose for humanity, and He desires our assistance. I'm quietly reminded of the verse we covered during our week on compassion that tells us God gives us gifts not for our ourselves but so that we may use them to serve others and we will not have received our gifts in vain. (**1 Peter 4:10**). He gives us gifts so that we might be more effective in furthering His greater purpose.

Let's look further into what kind of gifts God may grace us with and start with some Old Testament examples.

> **Exodus 28:3** – *You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood.*

> **Exodus 31:3–5** – *and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.*

> **Exodus 36:1** – *"Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whom the Lord has put skill and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded."*

All of these show that the Lord supernaturally bestowed skill and talent into the people whom he needed to do a specific job.

James 1:17 tells us that *"every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of lights,"* as does Romans:

> **Romans 11:36** - *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

All of it is from God and He gets the glory. These Exodus verses tell us in black-and-white that is the Lord, who has filled us with a spirit of skill.

I pray that my husband recognizes his gifts, all his talents, his intellect, and even his ability to be a good husband and father come from the Lord.

Do you remember when we talked about **2 Chronicles 26** and King Uzziah last week? We talked about how his prosperity led him to grow prideful which ended in his demise. Let's go to verses **14-15**. It explains there were incredibly gifted people in his company. It says skillful men invented machines and many other types of weapons of warfare. The people's ability to fabricate these weapons was from the Lord.

Let's head to the New Testament and go to **Romans 12:6–8.** This is where Paul explains many of the spiritual gifts that the people could receive from the Lord. This is where those spiritual gifting tests derive their questions from. A misnomer I believe we have about spiritual giftings is that we believe we only walk in one of these, and that we will always walk in this gifting, but as the beginning of verse six says, these gifts are all given to us through grace. We did not earn them and we would be prideful to think that we will always have them. It is 100% at the discretion of the Lord as to how He disperses the gifts, to what degree, and for how long. This is described in **1 Corinthians 12:11**. We may walk in a season of teaching and instruction, and then the next season the Lord wants to use us in a different area and He chooses to gift us

with a gift of mercy and we no longer need to focus as intently on teaching. I hope we all see our gifts as momentary graces from the Lord and not as a permanent fixture in our lives that we earned or deserved. Such pride could bring us to be like Samson who took advantage of his gifting until one day it was removed. I also encourage us to not speak about our spiritual giftings to others with a boastful attitude. We just covered humility last week, so let's remember that in this context as well.

Ephesians 4:11 also talks about people who are gifted in certain areas that are meant to further the kingdom of God. Apostles, prophets, evangelist, shepherds, and teachers.

1 Corinthians 12:4 tells us there are varieties of gifts, but one spirit which means that we are all on the same team, but we all play different positions. However, the team doesn't work effectively if the lineman wants to be a receiver or if the catcher also wants to be the pitcher. There is one Spirit working as one team with a variety of different positions all working together to accomplish the same goal.

1 Corinthians 7:7 says we each have our own gift from God in the same way that we are all different members of the same body. The enemy would love to use comparison as the thief of your joy when it comes to accepting your personal gifting.

To encourage my husband in this area, I would pray that he receives his gift with joy and gratitude and seeks for ways to use it in his everyday life with the people around him. I also want him to be confident in his personal gifting and that he leads the life the Lord has assigned to him (**1 Corinthians 7:17**), not to his neighbor. I want him to know that God is calling him to walk with Him in the place that he is in right now, no matter his current status, position, tax bracket, or mental space. In the same way that God worked with Moses disability, He will work with my husband's insecurity and deficiencies.

> **2 Timothy 1:6** – *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,*

Here, Paul is reminding Timothy that he is to fan into flame the gift of God. A fire left to itself will burn out. In order to get the fire going and keep it going our husbands cannot be passive. So Paul tells Timothy here to be bold, get going, and go for it.

At this time, Paul had probably 30 years on Timothy. No less than 25 times does Paul encourage Timothy to be bold and strong. What a blessing for Timothy to have an accountability partner, elder, and community like that of Paul in his life. Remember that Ecclesiastes verse that tells us, "woe was the person who does not have somebody to lift him up when he falls?" That's what Paul was for Timothy. He was a partner that continually fed him words of life and encouraged him to be bold. Maybe Timothy was a little timid and he needed Paul's encouragement. Or maybe Timothy was normally capable, but because of his great responsibility, he needed some extra support from Paul.

You may have seen the video that has been going viral recently with a doctor who mentions a study that was done in regards to prayer. It's extremely fascinating and if you want to see how science is proving scripture, I will link it in the description below. But the reason I bring it up is to show you that perhaps there is physical realities that happen inside our brains when we encourage and speak life into another person, thus increasing the importance of being in community with God-fearing people.

Let's look at **Romans 1:11**. Paul is telling the Romans that he is desperate to see them because he believes they could spiritually encourage one another, specifically by imparting a spiritual gift to strengthen them. This makes the assumption that Paul could not do this without being in their presence.

In **1 Thessalonians 2:12**, Paul is reminiscing about spending time exhorting and encouraging them to continue to walk uprightly in the things of God so that they might walk worthy of the call of God. To exhort means to encourage someone to practice what they've been taught. Walking out God's calling and purpose, especially knowing that it can change for different seasons of your life, requires being in a community that can speak life into you. They can be the one who lifts you up when you fall or stumble. And if you remember, Jesus sent the disciples out 2 x 2 as a way to equip them and protect them as they walked out their purpose.

2 Thessalonians 1:11–12 says that Paul and his company always prayed for them *"that God would make them worthy of his calling and fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power".* Our ability to discern, and then walk in our calling is greatly supported by the people we surround ourselves with. Their prayers of intercession were powerful in their effect. (**James 5:16**)

Look at **Acts 13:2**. While the people were in intentional fellowship and fasting, focused on worshiping

God, the spirit of the Lord gave them very specific instructions. They were to set apart Barnabas and Saul for their holy calling. It wasn't Barnabas that received his calling from the Lord. The people he was in community with are the ones that received the call on his behalf. This is so fascinating to me. This verse also says something else. "Set apart" means "separate to me." This means the Lord was asking them to separate Barnabas and Saul to God, thus away from other things. A commentary I read said you can't really say "yes" to God's call on your life until you can say "no" to things that will keep you from that call. This suggests that we have to be prepared to receive the call that God has on our life. David did not get thrown into Goliath's presence without preparation.

There have been times in the last few years where I really wanted to move forward. I thought I had figured out a great opportunity to begin down a path with the Lord, and yet that journey was what Hosea would call "hedged up with thorns". It didn't turn out like I thought it would. I wanted to go, but the Lord still had some stuff to work out in me before I would be equipped to handle the responsibility that came with the increase.

When our husbands begin to doubt or question their gifts or purpose, these verses are good examples of how important speaking words of life is to him, as well as emphasizing the importance of being in community with other believers who can use their gifts to strengthen our husbands. If our husband is a first baseman, but never gets thrown the ball, he is not going to become a terrific first baseman. He needs to be in practice with the other members of the team who are gifted in their own positions and we should be praying that our husband's find contentment in the preparation stages that come before our calling.

2 Peter 1:10 tells us to be *"all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall."* If God has called your husband to play the position of first base, he needs to be diligent to walk in that calling and practice so that his team can win. Being engaged with other members of the body of Christ is so important.

Now that we have laid a bit of the groundwork for what is needed to support somebody who is on the threshold of walking in their godly calling, let's look at some verses that confirm we will experience this calling as we step in stride with the Lord.

Psalm 20:4 – *May he grant you your heart's desire*

and fulfill all your plans!

This is a verse we could write a quick and easy prayer for, but let's dig into what this verse actually means, rather than speaking it out in a prosperity-gospel-like prayer. As we commune with God, read His word, and implement His instructions into our everyday lives, we will become more and more like Christ, thus changing our brains from being self-centered and individually focused to thinking more about the big picture of God's will. When we delight in spending time with Him and include Him in our day, our heart desires morph into desiring what He does, and as a result, He fulfills our plans, because those plans were His plans all along. Then we can say the words of Jesus as recorded in John:

> **John 17:4** – *I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.*

Let's look at this closer. The word "accomplished" is written in past tense. However, Jesus's work was not complete until the death on the cross, so it seems as though the verse should read "I am glorifying you on earth and accomplishing the work that you gave me to do." But that's not how it's read. David Guzik's commentary explains that Jesus saw the work on the cross has already finished, completed in the heart and mind of God. Now it just had to be done. There is a similar sense in which God sees our own work of transformation and perfection as already complete, before the fact. Now it just has to be done.

In the same way, look at the end of **Romans 4:17.** *"who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."* The angel of the Lord called Gideon, a mighty man of valor before he ever showed any evidence of being that type of person. The angel called into existence the thing that did not exist. He spoke life into that which was dead. All throughout the Bible, God calls us holy, pure, blameless, righteous people, even though we are, in actuality, sinful and broken. But there is something very important here to learn about our brains and how we receive information. Science has proven that when we replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts, it physically changes our brain structure.

In the same way that God told Jeremiah to not speak about himself negatively and God demonstrated to Moses how to rebuke the lies, the words that our husbands hear, including the words that he doesn't hear, have a physical affect on the structure of our husband's brains. If he walks out his life with humility to the degree that Jesus and Paul tell us to, I think it would be extremely likely that no matter what the Lord calls

our husbands to, he is going to feel unequipped simply based on the level of his humility. But there is power in our words! I truly encourage you to speak out some of these prayers in real time over your husband throughout this week, and honestly, going forward until the Lord calls him home. I am going to challenge myself to do this as well.

Let's go back to the psalms and talking about being in alignment with the Lord.

> **Psalm 37:4** – *Delight yourself in the Lord,*
> *and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

This is an if/then statement. If we delight in the Lord, He will give us the desires of the heart. In the same way that we talked about Psalm 20:4, as we spend time with the Lord, we become more sanctified, thus thinking more like Him and our desires become in alignment with His desires so by Him fulfilling His own personal desires He's also fulfilling our desires because now they are one and the same.

I was chatting with my husband about whether or not he has begun to see his own divine calling and after he said no, his reason was that he felt like he was lacking in spending time with God. I immediately refuted his concern because he spends 4 to 6 days a week sitting with me, reading his Bible in the mornings. It's not a lack of time. What we discovered was that it's more of a lack of application. Men are really good at compartmentalizing. They can keep work at work and they can keep family at home. So it only makes sense that they would naturally keep their quiet time as their quiet time and then when they enter the workplace, God is not allowed to penetrate into that compartment of their day. We talked about different ways that he could spend time with the Lord that would begin to train his brain to think about God in the context of his work and home life. Maybe his quiet time looks less like reading the Bible and more like journaling or exploring areas at work where he can see God moving. Maybe that's through recognizing successful business negotiations as God's blessing before it's due to his own hard work. Or maybe he can think about a challenge that he faces at work and sit in listening prayer for how God wants him to view the situation. The hope is that through this intentional practice of connecting those neural pathways of thinking about God in the context of the workplace, it might train his brain to do it in real time.

I explained to him and I've talked to a friend about this as well, that for my specific work, the lines between work and personal quiet time with God are extremely blurred and it's only through checking in with the

health of my spirit that I can discern if my quiet time has become too work focused. If I find myself more on edge or irritable, there is a high probability that I need to put work down and check in with the Lord on a personal level. I am so thankful that for the last month, as I've been writing and preparing this entire 10 week series, the Lord has been using my study time to speak to me personally, so the lines between my quiet time and my work time have been one and the same!

In my husband's situation, he spoke about the word "abide" and he felt that this is his area of opportunity: including God and all the moments throughout his day. He believes by doing that, he will begin to understand more specifically about God's purpose in this season of his life and what He's calling him to.

Psalm 20:4 and Psalm 37:4 are different ways of showing that abiding in the Lord is where we find our desires and plans are fulfilled.

I like **Psalm 107:9**. It's going to be one that I write a prayer for in my husband's prayer Bible. It gives the image of the Israelites walking in the wilderness and being hungry. The way the Lord guided the people during that time is a picture of how He delivers the lost, thirsty, hungry soul, and fulfills it with goodness.

If your husband is hungry and longing for purpose, this may be a verse you want to dig into more. I would use it as a verse of hope in times of discouragement for my husband. My prayer might sound like, "Thank You Lord for Your promise of bringing good things to those who are hungry and longing. I ask that You bless my husband with a sense of purpose in his wilderness season and this verse tells me You are faithful to do so."

Psalm 145:19 talks about none other than the fear of the Lord. We have hit this topic over and over throughout this 10 weeks series. To fear the Lord is to know about Him and respect Him and worship Him. That is abiding. And what happens when we abide in the Lord? Our desires become His desires and therefore by Him fulfilling His own desires He thus fulfill ours too.

John 4:34 is Jesus not focusing primarily on the work, need, strategy, techniques, or even the needy soul – essentially what we would call "our calling" – but He firstly focuses on doing the will of God and accomplishing His work. This is counterintuitive and against our natural self-seeking minds, but it's true.

Our husbands are likely looking for a specific job, task, charity, or action that he is supposed to do that would confirm his "calling," but that's not at all what the Bible says. God has put a purpose deep in our hearts and it's not any specific job or extracurricular activity; it's to accomplish His will. We are given a laundry list of ways in which we are supposed to do that: through patience, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, goodness, in love, with peace, joy, and with self-control. He bestows supernatural gifts onto us as needed to help us accomplish His will. Sometimes, that is speaking a kind word to a stranger at the grocery store. Sometimes, it's creating a work environment that is positive and spirit-filled. Other times, it's organizing a nationwide mission to cover 85 grieving families with intercessory prayer. That last one was an example of a supernatural gifting I walked in last year. I've never done anything like that before and I could list 100 reasons why I'm not qualified to even think about doing something like that. I was gifted with the gift of teaching and leading. Other people on our team had the gift of administration. Some of you had the gift of generosity and helped finance the project. All of us were blessed with the gift of service. We were all playing different positions, not able to complete the task in our own power, but dependent upon one another to accomplish our goal. And then that season ended.

For some of us, our calling might change overtime as the Lord further sanctifies us in certain areas. Sometimes, we are used to encourage, support, and disciple others, pouring into people in need. And other times, the tables are turned and we are to allow other people to pour into us as we walk through a valley. I think it's safe to say though that in every situation and every season, we have a purpose and a calling.

Let me ask you a question. What if your husband's calling for this moment in his life is not serving, but to be served? For somebody to walk in their calling of serving, there has to be somebody to serve. For somebody to walk out their calling as discipler, there has to be a person willing to be a disciple. Maybe the current calling is to receive. And always, as husband and father, the biggest calling on his life is to his home and family. That might not feel as grand or as exciting as organizing a worldwide mission to end poverty, but it is equally important.

You should be familiar with this verse in **2 Timothy 2:21.** It talks about making the decision to walk away from our sin. We talked about this verse when we talked about spiritual hygiene a few weeks ago. We are to cleanse ourselves from what is dishonorable and this is a self-cleansing for service, so I'm praying that my husband has a conviction to do away with any evil that he entertains in his daily life so that his spirit

would be ready and willing to answer God's call and step into any and every good work He has for him, including the workplace, school, home, or in the community.

When I say willing, this is what I mean.

> **Isaiah 6:8** – *And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."*

When God asked this question, He was not confused, but He opened an opportunity to take volunteers. God wants those who are eager and willing to step forward. I also noticed that Isaiah had ears to hear the Lord's question. This tells me that Isaiah made room in his daily life to be quiet and still in order to: 1) hear the Lord speak, and 2) recognize it was the Lord's voice.

I wonder if part of my husband's quest to figure out his purpose is due to his own allowance of distractions in his life.

I'm a creative person and I often tell my him that I cannot be creative when my schedule is out of control. In order to be creative, I have to have time to get bored. And in this 21st-century, there is absolutely no time for boredom. I almost have to put boredom on my calendar so as to block out any opportunity the enemy want to use to keep me busy.

In the same way, are our husbands overly consumed with work, stress, finances, media, kids, activities, hobbies, or house projects that they simply do not make time to be still and listen for the Lord's voice?

Here is a great scripture to highlight to give your husband confidence that the Lord promises to guide him continually.

> **Isaiah 58:11** – *And the Lord will guide you continually*
> *and satisfy your desire in scorched places*
> *and make your bones strong;*
> *and you shall be like a watered garden,*
> *like a spring of water,*

whose waters do not fail.

But I warn you, this is a conditional promise. If you start in verse 6 and read all the way through verse 14, you will see a gigantic if/then statement. Verse 6 starts the "if" and verse eight begins the "then". For these, if/then statements, if we check off the "if" as if it's a punchlist, we will never experience the "then". That's where the Pharisees fell short. There's a heart posture that must occur through that "if" statement. The "then" statement should never be expected. It's not a promise that we can claim without considering the context of its placement in the scriptures. I don't want to give anybody a false sense of hope, thereby leading you to believe that God has promised this to you and if it doesn't happen, you think He's not a trustworthy God. Again, this is not the prosperity gospel. The "if" part of these if/then statements is our responsibility. We must use our self-will to actively choose to walk in what God is calling us to do.

So verses 6-7 are the conditions and verse 8-14 are the blessings. Verse 11 talks about the enjoyment of health and life of the soul that's impossible to achieve for the superficial follower. Verse 12 says that those who serve God with all their hearts and souls accomplish great things. We cannot do the work of building for the kingdom of God if we are walking with Him superficially.

If I'm praying this verse for my husband, it might sound like, "Thank You for Your immense blessings that You promise us when we commit our hearts to follow You. I pray that my husband's greatest desire is to see Your mercies throughout his day. I pray that he's eager to talk about them when he comes home and that through his love and devotion to You, he is able to clearly receive Your guidance. I pray You bless him with Your joy that doesn't fail."

1 Thessalonians 5:24 – *He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*

If God has saved you, then His calling for your life is in you, and as you abide in him, He is faithful to make it happen. His manifestation of your calling is through His power, not yours. You have one job:

Matthew 6:33 – *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

But remember, this is a conditional promise. We have to seek first His kingdom before we get all these

things added to us. Before our husbands can confirm their calling and purpose, they have to seek God first. Walking out a calling without God is doing so in vain and more Christians are defeated on account of self-reliance than by the enemy's attack.

There are times in the New Testament, where Paul thought he was supposed to do something, but God had a different plan for him. He really wanted to fellowship with the Romans, but never got to. He also talked about desiring to travel east, but was rerouted.

There are some mysteries the Lord leaves for Himself. No matter how closely we are walking and abiding in Him, we will never know all of the answers. Not even Paul knew how his journey would play out. What he did know though was that his purpose in life was to *"fight the good fight of the faith"* (**1 Timothy 6:12**) and to *"press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (**Philippians 3:14**). To partner with God is the prize. That's what the ultimate calling is for all of us. And how that plays out in each of our lives will look very different from one another.

When our hearts and minds are focused on taking hold of the eternal life and living in communion with the Lord, He will guide our steps every day in the direction that He wants. For some people, it may look like a single ministry on a global mission and for other people, it might be ministering individually to those in the workplace or the grocery store. I remember early on in my new life, I got to have godly discussions with the dog groomer and others along the path I took to walk out the busy schedule of being a wife and mom.

Our calling also includes walking out the most basic Christian virtues that we are to use to govern our human relationships as described in **Colossians 3:12** and **Ephesians 4:1–3.**

For all of us and our husbands, I pray **Ephesians 1:16–19**, that Jesus would give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, enlighten our eyes and hearts so we may know what is the hope to which we have been called. May we understand the richness of His inheritance and the immeasurable greatness of His power to all of us who believe.

What a journey we have been on! I hope this week was as much of an encouragement to you as it was to me. Next week is our last week! You are so close to the end. Let's finish strong and keep writing **2-3 prayers a day** through to the end.

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CLEAN YOUR HEART

Use this on days that feel hard or create a daily rhythm of surrender and begin every prayer session with it.

This is not a moment to perform, produce, or prove anything. Quiet yourself before God and intentionally lay down pride, distraction, control, and any known sin. Confess what Holy Spirit brings to mind. Release your own agendas, assumptions, and expectations. Choose humility. Choose obedience. Ask God to empty you of self so He can fill you with His Spirit. Do not move forward until your heart is surrendered and your spirit is yielded.

Lord, thank your calling me to draw near to You in this way.[1] Your Word says the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working[2] and You hear the prayer of the righteous.[3] I know my sins have made a separation between You and I.[4] If I cherish sin in my heart, You, Lord, will not listen.[5] Therefore, let me test and examine my ways.[6] Lord, weigh my spirit,[7] for even a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough.[8] Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting![9] Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.[10]

[Selah - pause, listen, repent, forgive, receive grace]

Thank you for cleansing me from what is dishonorable, that I am a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to You, and ready for every good work.[11]

[1] James 4:8; [2] James 5:16; [3] Proverbs 15:29; [4] Isaiah 59:2; [5] Psalm 66:18; [6] Lamentations 3:40; [7] Proverbs 16:2; [8] 1 Corinthians 5:6; [9] Psalm 139:23-24; [10] Psalm 51:10; [11] 2 Timothy 2:21

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