

August 22, 2021 James Gallaher God Gives Purpose Series: The Heart of Freedom

God has a purpose for individuals and for those individuals together - this body of believers. Let's discover the why behind our purpose. Vision gives us the perspective to help see where we are going. But vision without purpose is hollow. The why gives a purpose behind the destination.

Having form without function can look right but not accomplish what is intended. You can have certain characteristics without function. A lot of Christians live without the function of godliness and have only the form of godliness. That statement feels like judgment but it highlights the struggle for us. We have the desire to be functional and be significant to God. We have the faith and expectation, but sometimes we find ourselves at a dead end - in a wilderness - not knowing where to go. Are you burdened today with what you cannot change?

We need community and community needs each one of us. Our function can be found when we are in community. Christians can walk in bondage, believe in lies, and hang on to the past. God wants to separate us from the past that holds us back. Jesus alone holds our future, not the failures, lies, shortcomings. None of those things determine the future that God has for us. Those things have no authority when we surrender them to the Lord. Let God, the bondage breaker, bring peace and control your future. God allows us to walk out of our past and into a different future. Are you dealing with something from the past?

Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for prosperity and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*

We don't know our immediate future. But in the end, we win. The steps of the future we don't know but we know that He has our best in mind, not calamity. This doesn't mean we won't have hardships, but that we are not alone in the hardship.

God created us and called us to rise above our past to the purposes He has for us. God has chosen us to be a part of where He placed us. **Jeremiah 1:5** *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.* **Ephesians 1:4** *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.*

We are created to reflect God. Some circumstances make us question how this could reflect God. Do we think our failures prevent us from receiving His promises? Our past did not create us.

The right form doesn't guarantee function. An example of a trim router is that it has no ability to do its job without the source. The key to its function is connection to the right source. Our purpose will only be discovered when we are connected to the right source. **Jeremiah 29:11** *For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for prosperity and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.* Our realities do not reflect this promise and so we stop. We submit to our lives of suffering and we stay put and frustratedly wait for change. But the promise doesn't end ...**verse 12-13** *Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.*

Don't stop with the form. Learn how to gain the function - to trust that God hears us. Believe and trust that He will find us and He will hear us. If we seek Him, we will find Him. He plays no games of hide and seek.

We can't mess our purpose up so bad that we lose His purpose. Do you feel broken and lost without the purpose God has for you? We can delay the promises but we can't get away from them. Some can get by with talent or gifting but purpose has so much more. **Romans 11:29** *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.* **Philippians 3:13** *Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.*

Do you need to move on from things that have plagued you? that have held you back? God is calling us to get a clear picture of His calling for us. Look ahead and not behind. God wants to break us free from our past. Are we attached to people? to things? to experiences? to a vision? It's hard to grasp the new by hanging on the past. Empty your grasp and let go. Do you want to be set free but the bondage follows you around? Be willing to release what He didn't give you - lies, failure... What's your favorite sin? What do we hold on to? An attitude, a relationship... what do we need to let go of? Our past doesn't dictate where we go, but we have to let go. We need a right vision and that is about what is ahead not what is behind.

The best place to learn about purpose is with community. We need a common excitement and unity in our place. Our giftings will make room for themselves. They will be made known in community. What is ahead is what matters!!! Grab on and get excited about what is ahead. Let's do it together... through community.

What is your favorite sin? What follows you? What excuses do you make? addiction? a toxic relationship? a lie? Open your hands and let go. Let God fill your hands with His purpose. Do you need God to reveal purpose in your life? Find a place and be alone with the Lord. Pray that He would bring clarity of purpose and function.

What is your favorite sin?

Discuss the difference between the form of a Christian and the function of a Christian.

Are you burdened with something from the past that you want to let go of?

Do you need clarity for your purpose and function?