

TALKING POINTS

STRETCH - LIVING FOR GOD'S PURPOSE

LEANING IN

Every day we have a choice in front of us - live for our purposes or live for God's purposes. If we live for ourselves, we only have ourselves to show for our efforts. Yet, to "stretch" and increase our capacity for God, we must learn to live for God's purposes.

Discovering the purposes of God in our lives starts with the willingness to be the *means* - we don't have to be the hero of our story. Becoming a means to an end is the only way we ever discover God's purposes for our lives. Being a means to an end is what gives things meaning in our lives. If we refuse to become a means to an end, our lives will never have the meaning God has intended for us.

Since discovering the purposes of God in our lives is so important, often the question which follows is - "how do we know if we're living out God's purposes in our lives, and not just our own?" The answer is in the response to this question - "are we making a *difference* in other people's lives?"

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11, 1 Timothy 4:12, Matthew 5:16

Can you share a time when someone was a "means" regarding the purposes of God in your life ?

LIVING IT OUT

Seeing the purpose of God in our lives is the summation of devotions we can commit to everyday. Put together, they establish the purposes of God in our lives. Here are three key devotions for choosing God's purposes in our lives:

A Life Devoted To Worship - worship is not necessarily an *experience*, it's beyond that - it's giving our *whole* lives to Jesus as an act of worship. To genuinely worship God is to recognize *His* worth and worthiness and respond in all appropriate ways to it. By worshipping through *how we live*, we become a crucial means to exalting the Name, Character, Works and Reputation of God.

Read Romans 12:1

What should a "living sacrifice" actually look like in our day-to-day lives?

A Life Devoted To Connection - we are called to connection. This means to be devoted to Christ, we must be devoted to *each other*. In this world, *we* are the means for God loving others!

Read Acts 2:42

How is connection a "means" for showing the love of God to others?

A Life Devoted To Serving - when we serve we become a "means" to the movement of the Holy Spirit. When serving, we begin to exercise the spiritual gifts God has given us to lift up one another. There are two kinds of spiritual gifts, Serving and Speaking. Since knowing our spiritual gift is crucial to having an effective life of service before God, we need to know there are three ways to identify what spiritual gift we possess.

1. Look inside our hearts - what (and who) does our heart break for?
2. Look at what are others saying about our lives - do they see Jesus in us?
3. Look to discover by experience - have you taken the chance to step out and find your gifting?

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11

What are your spiritual gifts - do you know?