

If Only... Living Life With No Regrets (print edition).

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Session Six

Moving Forward

In the past five lessons we made amazing discoveries of how we can live regret-free lives. Yet this is not the end of our journey. It's only the beginning. We discovered how to experience a fresh encounter with God. We learned that while the emotional pain of regret helps us to avoid mistakes in the future, God never intended us to live there permanently. We learned scriptural principles to help put the past behind us, to forgive both ourselves and those who wronged us, and live beyond ourselves in generous service to others.

But we can't stop here. In this session, we learn how to spiritually take new ground and follow God's purpose for our lives so we can live free of regret in the future.

In the past few weeks you made good intentions to move forward. However, if you do not act on your intentions, you inevitably lose your momentum and drift backwards. Be mindful not to let that happen. As you focus on God's purpose for your life, intentionally follow His plan, and surround yourself with life-giving friends, you will experience lasting life change.

God is moving in your life. He is for you. You can trust Him with your todays and confidently move forward into your tomorrows.

We don't need to
compare ourselves
to what others are
doing to determine
our purpose.

CHECKING IN

God created and designed us with a unique purpose and plan to fulfill. It's easy to compare ourselves with others and think if we were more like them, we would be satisfied in life. Nothing could be further from the truth. We don't need to compare ourselves to others to determine our purpose. God knows your purpose. Ask him! He created you. He can show you how to fulfill His plan for your life each day. One thing is certain, He created you to do good works.

In 1 Corinthians 3:14, we read there is an eternal blessing and reward for doing good. Good works don't get us into Heaven; however, how we accomplish God's plan here in this life determines our heavenly reward in the next.

As we pray and ask God about our unique design, we come to know and understand His plan for our lives. Then as we partner with Him, we can confidently move forward and make a significant impact in the world.

Get started with these questions:

- Do you believe a person's God-given purpose can change over time? Why or why not?
- How did God speak to you from this *If Only* journey?

Memorize these verses:

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.

Psalm 139:13–14

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw...If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

1 Corinthians 3:11–12,14

 **Up Next**

Watch The Lesson

Use the next page for notes to write your thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember from the teaching. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the lesson, then discuss among your group. Remember to try to share the responsibilities of leading the discussion each week.

WATCH THE LESSON

God designed us with a unique purpose. We must learn to persevere in that purpose to live a regret-free life.

The Three Ps of Perseverance:

1. Stay focused on your _____ .

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

Psalm 139:13–16

Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed.

Acts 13:36 (NIV)

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw...If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

1 Corinthians 3:11-12,14

- God created you with a unique purpose that only you were designed to fulfill.
- If we want to live free from regret, we need to stay focused on our God-given purpose.
- God eternally rewards those who fulfill His plans in life.

2. Create your _____ .

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it."

Habakkuk 2:2

- As you come to understand your God-given purpose, write it down.
- To stay on track with God's purpose for your life, create a "Life Plan" to write down the specific goals you believe God has given you for the key areas of your life.
- Review your goals in each area regularly to make sure you're moving in the direction of God's plan for your life.

3. Stick with positive _____ .

As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

Proverbs 27:17

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Timothy 4:7

- Submit your goals to a trusted friend for wisdom and accountability to keep you on track.
- Surrounding yourself with friends who are life-giving and positive brings about amazing growth and change in your life.
- Continue the relationships you have built within your small group over the last six weeks. Commit to do life together and to encourage each other to fulfill their God-given purpose.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you have learned from the weekend message and the small group study. Then think about practical steps you can take to live out what you've learned.

Read Psalm 139:13–16

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

- Do you think it is easy or difficult for people to discover their purpose? Why or why not?
- What could hinder a person from discovering God's purpose and plan for their life? What could they do to better understand God's purpose and plan?

Read Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

- We all need an “iron sharpens iron” relationship to help us stay on track. How can this type of relationship impact your life?
- This last session encourages us to create a Life Plan. What are the benefits of creating a Life Plan and writing it down? How can having a Life Plan change the course of someone’s life? How could it change your life?
- Why is it important to submit your goals and plans to a trusted, godly friend?
- We know anything healthy grows. The same can be said for the talents and the gifts God has given us. In what areas would you like to have more knowledge, experience, and training to accomplish God’s purpose for your life? How can we as a group help you continue to grow in these areas?

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests and praise reports. Write your personal prayer requests and make notes of how you can pray for each other.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

DIVING DEEPER

Take some time this week to review the previous week's lessons and dig into God's Word about this week's topic.

This week we learned in order to live a life free from regret, we need to determine our God-given purpose and fulfill it. You must be intentional to write down God's plan and seek wisdom, accountability, and encouragement from trusted friends.

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw...If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

1 Corinthians 3:11-12,14

For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 6:20

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Jeremiah 1:5 (NIV)

Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

Psalms 139:16

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day...

2 Timothy 4:7-8

Questions

- 1 Corinthians 3:11-14 teaches that if our work endures we receive a reward. According to this scripture, what kind of work endures? Do you see this kind of work in your own life?
- Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 that he fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. We're also responsible to fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith. Apply this to your life and describe what this looks like for you.

We need to
determine our
God-given
purpose and
fulfill it.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

You will need two items—a pen and this guide—to hear from God through these daily devotions!

What is God saying to you?

Open to your reading for the day. Take your time reading both the scriptures and devotional. Write out what you are hearing from the Bible under the first question, *What is God saying to you?*

What does it mean to you?

What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture and devotional? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Write this out under the second question, *What does it mean to you?*

What action steps do you need to take?

Personalize what you have read by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, a new promise, or correction for a particular area of your life. Write how this truth applies to you today in the third question, *What action steps do you need to take?*

Bring it to God in prayer.

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture or even a prayer for a great insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out in the space titled, *Bring it to God in prayer.*

Day 1

Scripture

For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 6:20

Reflect

One of the main challenges we face in life is the issue of motives. Why do we do what we do? Sometimes our unwillingness to ask the hard questions and answer honestly keeps us stuck in regret. Consistently refocusing our lives on God's priorities helps keep our motives in check. In Mark 12:29–31, Jesus said there are two great commandments in life: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength... And love your neighbor as yourself.”

Many people focus on themselves and, thus, remain stuck in the past, unable to move forward. The trajectory of their lives is based on themselves, and not God. The desire to glorify God should be a basic root motive of all true followers of Jesus. The highest compliment for a Christian is, “They love God with all their hearts, and they live to help people.”

If you're stuck in the past with the pain of regret, maybe your focus has been on yourself? God wants you to know that living for His glory is the ultimate purpose for your life. The famous Olympic gold medalist Eric Liddell once said, “I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure.” Doing what God created us to do brings Him pleasure. Fulfilling the purpose He created us for glorifies Him.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 2

Scripture

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Jeremiah 1:5 (NIV)

Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors...

Acts 13:36 (NIV)

Reflect

God tells Jeremiah the Prophet he was in His mind long before he was born. In the same way, God knew you long before you were born. He uniquely designed you to make a difference in the lives of others and glorify Him in all you do.

How do you discover God's unique plan for you?

- **Ask Him.**

Purpose is found through a life connected to God. Ask God to reveal your purpose. Ask God to reveal your purpose as you spend time in the Bible and prayer. He will answer you.

- **Note what you're passionate about.**

To find clues to your unique purpose, look at the things that stir your heart and motivate you to action. When you are passionate about something, ask God if He has an assignment for you in that area.

- **Assess your gifts and strengths.**

What are you good at? What are your strengths? God has given you talents and abilities to fulfill your specific purpose. You may need to grow in these gifts as you begin to discover your purpose. Life becomes fun and exciting when you partner with God in His plan.

There's a reason you were born at this time and place in history. Embark today on the journey to discover God's purpose for your life. Upon discovery, go out and make a difference in your world and beyond.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 3

Scripture

He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.

Proverbs 13:20 (NIV)

A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment.

Proverbs 18:1 (NIV)

Reflect

A great way to find more clues to your God-given purpose is to surround yourself with people who are “wise” and following God’s purpose. As you walk with mature followers of Jesus, they can help you discover God’s plan for your life—but that’s not the only reason you need godly friends.

It is important to have strong, godly people surrounding you as you face the ups and downs of life. It is common to have hundreds of social media “friends,” but no one to call when you really need support or encouragement. Isolation and surface-level friendships are dangerous and cause us to veer from God’s plan and purpose. We are made for relationship and real connection with others.

Your life changes when you establish true friendships with strong, wise, and committed believers. As you grow and walk in your purpose, God brings people into your life you can encourage and support, just as others encouraged and supported you. Staying connected with godly friends allows you to overcome the tough times and, likewise, help others in their times of need.

It is important to surround yourself with people who can lift you up and love you when you feel like giving up. Stay in a small group and attend church regularly as if your life depended on it—because it does. Discovering and fulfilling your purpose is directly connected to the godly relationships in your life.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 4

Scripture

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it."

Habakkuk 2:2

Reflect

Living with purpose is one of God's highest priorities for us. He desires for you to clearly understand His vision, plan, and purpose for your life. In fact, Habakkuk 2:2 tells us to write the plans in simple and clear fashion.

So far this week we discussed three important aspects of understanding God's plan for our lives: one, praying for God's wisdom; two, discovering how to partner with Him; three, clearly writing goals and action steps. A practical way to do this is by writing a Life Plan. Over the next two days, we will help you create a basic Life Plan you can periodically adjust as God gives you more direction.

Step 1: At the end of this lesson or on your computer, list five to seven key areas in your life you want to grow related to God's direction, purpose, and plan.

Consider areas such as your:

- Relationship with God
- Relationships with others
- Health
- Finances
- Career
- Church involvement

Step 2: Once you've made your list, write a purpose statement for each key area. For example, in the area of friends, you might write something like: "My purpose is to develop a few godly friendships to encourage, support, and help me grow in God's plan for my life." Take time to pray over each area before writing the purpose statement.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 5

Scripture

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it."

Habakkuk 2:2

Reflect

God's vision and plan for your life can only be achieved through *knowing* where you are now, *where* you want to go, and *how* you plan to get there.

Today continue writing your Life Plan. Here are a few more steps to help bring clarity and direction to your God-given purpose.

Step 3: Review your key areas and each general-purpose statement. Now, write the overall goal for each area. Include one or two scriptures for each category. For example, in the area of your relationship with God you might write something like: "My relationship with God is growing stronger every day as I spend time reading the Bible, praying, and connecting with my small group and church family."

Step 4: Once you've written your goal, write two to three specific action steps in each area. The more measurable your action steps, the more you can define your progress. For example, in the area of your health, you might write something like: "Walk at least 10,000 steps five days a week and record it in my app." Create small, measurable steps that help you feel success along the way.

Step 5: Now it's time to put your plan into action! Review and adjust it as you continue to spiritually mature and receive more clarity from God. Be patient with your progress, stay intentional, and celebrate the small wins. Remember, this is not your plan, but God's plan for you. Partner with Him each day as you live out your new Life Plan.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

Day 6

Scripture

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV)

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day...

2 Timothy 4:7–8

Reflect

God is not limited by space or time. No one can fathom His great power throughout Creation—yet God has chosen you and me to carry out His purposes here on earth. Before He formed the world or anything in it, God planned to create you with His divine purpose in mind. To live our lives with God's purpose in mind means we live to advance the cause of Christ.

Though your life is finite, it's also eternal.

That's a sobering thought. For now, though, you get to choose how to live on this planet and be remembered. So how do you plan to live? Have you thought about your legacy?

Living out God's purpose isn't just about building a big business—although God may have created you for that. It isn't just about being the best athlete, the best student, or the best parent in the world. You may accumulate worldly wealth during your time here on this planet, which is wonderful, but when you die, you won't take any of it with you. The only way to have lasting impact in this world is to commit your life to God and help others through your God-given gifts and talents?

The wealth of this world pales in comparison to the riches of following Jesus and to the crown of righteousness waiting for you in eternity. How will you live now knowing His eternal plan for your life? Review your Life Plan weekly and watch your life be enriched as you live a life of no regrets.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action steps do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.
