

A Journey with Purpose

Finding God's Plan For Your Life



Your Journey was Meant to be Shared

- You were formed for **GOD'S FAMILY**



Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)

- 5) God's unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. **And this gave him great pleasure.**



Your Journey was Meant to be Shared

- You were formed for **GOD'S FAMILY**
- God never intended for you to be **ALONE**
- Sharing your journey with others is called **FELLOWSHIP**
- Fellowship is your **2nd PURPOSE**
- God has established a **FAMILY RELATIONSHIP**



Galatians 3:26-29 (NIV)

- 26) **You are all sons of God through faith** in Christ Jesus,
- 27) for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
- 28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- 29) If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.



Ephesians 1:18-19 (NIV)

- 18) I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious **inheritance in the saints**,
- 19) and his incomparably great power for us who believe.




Life is All About Love

- Because God is **LOVE**, the most important lesson that He wants you to learn is how to love
- Loving others is how you are **MOST LIKE GOD**



Galatians 5:14 (Message)

- 14) For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: **Love others as you love yourself.**



John 13:34-35 (Message)

- 34) “Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another.
- 35) **This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples** - when they see the love you have for each other.”



Life is All About Love

- Because God is **LOVE**, the most important lesson that He wants you to learn is how to love
- Loving others is how you are **MOST LIKE GOD**
- Love cannot be learned in **ISOLATION**



Fellowship Teaches Us:

1. Life with Love is **WORTHLESS**



1st Corinthians 13:3 (Message)

- 3) If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. **So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.**




Matthew 22:36-40 (NIV)

- 36) “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”
- 37) Jesus replied: “**Love the Lord** your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’
- 38) This is the first and greatest commandment.
- 39) And the second is like it: ‘**Love your neighbor** as yourself.’
- 40) All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”



Fellowship Teaches Us:

1. Life without Love is **WORTHLESS**
2. Love with last **FOREVER**
3. We will be **EVALUATED** on our Love



Matthew 25:37-40 (NIV)

- 37) “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’
- 38) When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?’
- 39) When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’
- 40) “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, **whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.**’



The Best Expression of Love is Time

- When you give someone your **TIME**, you are giving something that you'll never get back
- If you say that relationships are important to you, you have to prove it by investing your **TIME** in them

We are Called to Belong





Romans 12:4-5 (NIV)

- 4) Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,
- 5) so in Christ we who are many form one body, and **each member belongs to all the others.**

We are Called to Belong

- Following Christ means **BELONGING**, not just **BELIEVING**





Romans 12:4-5 (Message)

- 4) In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around.
- 5) The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. **Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body.** But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we?



We are Called to Belong

- Following Christ means **BELONGING**, not just **BELIEVING**
- The first symptom of spiritual decline is often **INCONSISTENT ATTENDANCE** at Memorial Services and other gatherings of the Body



Benefits of being a Member

1. It helps force you out of living a **SELF-CENTERED LIFE**



1st Corinthians 12:26 (NIV)

- 26) If **one** part suffers, **every** part suffers with it; if **one** part is honored, **every** part rejoices with it.



1st John 3:16 (NIV)

- 16)** This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. **And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.**



Benefits of being a Member

1. It helps force you out of living a **SELF-CENTERED LIFE**
2. It helps you develop **SPIRITUAL MUSCLE**
3. It helps keep you from **BACKSLIDING**



Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)

- 13) But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, **so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.**



James 5:19-20 (Message)

- 19) My dear friends, **if you know people who have wandered off from God's truth, don't write them off. Go after them. Get them back**
- 20) **and you will have rescued precious lives from destruction and prevented an epidemic of wandering away from God.**




Real Fellowship

- **REAL FELLOWSHIP** is much more than an allegiance to a Statement of Faith
- **REAL FELLOWSHIP** is much more than Coffee and Cookies
- **REAL FELLOWSHIP** is all about **EXPERIENCING LIFE TOGETHER**



Real Fellowship

1. People experience **AUTHENTICITY**



1st John 1:7-8 (Message)

- 7) But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, **we also experience a shared life with one another**, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God's Son, purges all our sin.
- 8) If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense.



James 5:16 (Message)

- 16) Make this your common practice: **Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed.** The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.



Real Fellowship

1. People experience **AUTHENTICITY**
2. People experience **MUTUALITY**



1st Corinthians 12:25-26 (Message)

- 25)** The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: **every part dependent on every other part**, the parts we mention and the parts we don't,
- 26)** the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.



Real Fellowship

1. People experience **AUTHENTICITY**
2. People experience **MUTUALITY**
3. People experience **SYMPATHY**



Galatians 6:2 (Message)

- 2) Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. **Share their burdens**, and so complete Christ's law.



Real Fellowship

1. People experience **AUTHENTICITY**
2. People experience **MUTUALITY**
3. People experience **SYMPATHY**
4. People experience **MERCY**



2nd **Corinthians 2:7-8 (CEV)**

- 7) When people sin, you should **forgive and comfort them**, so they won't give up in despair.
- 8) You should make them sure of your love for them.



Colossians 3:12-13 (NIV)

- 12) Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
- 13) **Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**



James 3:17-18 (Message)

- 17) Real wisdom, **God's wisdom**, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced.
- 18) You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results **only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other**, treating each other with dignity and honor.

Cultivating Real Fellowship

1. It takes **HONESTY**





1st Corinthians 5:3, 6 & 11 (Message)

- 3) ...You must not simply look the other way and hope it goes away on its own. **Bring it out in the open and deal with it** in the authority of Jesus our Master.
- 6) ...You pass it off as a small thing, but it's anything but that. Yeast, too, is a "small thing," but it works its way through a whole batch of bread dough pretty fast.
- 11) ...I *am* saying that you shouldn't act as if everything is just fine when one of your Christian companions is promiscuous or crooked, is flip with God or rude to friends, gets drunk or becomes greedy and predatory. **You can't just go along with this**, treating it as acceptable behavior.



Cultivating Real Fellowship

1. It takes **HONESTY**
2. It takes **HUMILITY**



Romans 12:16 (CEV)

- 16) Be friendly with everyone. **Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others.** Make friends with ordinary people.



Cultivating Real Fellowship

1. It takes **HONESTY**
2. It takes **HONESTY**
3. It takes **COURTESY**
4. It takes **CONFIDENTIALITY**
5. It takes **FREQUENCY**



Philippians 2:1-4 (Message)

- 1) If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you *care* -
- 2) then do me a favor: **Agree with each other**, love each other, be deep-spirited friends.
- 3) Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead.
- 4) Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. **Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.**



Restoring Fellowship

1. Talk to God **BEFORE** talking to the other person
2. Always take the **INITIATIVE**



Matthew 5:23-24 (Message)

- 23) “This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you,
- 24) abandon your offering, leave immediately, **go to this friend and make things right.** Then and only then, come back and work things out with God.



Restoring Fellowship

1. Talk to God **BEFORE** talking to the other person
2. Always take the **INITIATIVE**
3. **SYMPATHIZE** with their feelings



Philippians 2:4 (NIV)

- 4) Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the **interests of others.**



Restoring Fellowship

1. Talk to God **BEFORE** talking to the other person
2. Always take the **INITIATIVE**
3. **SYMPATHIZE** with their feelings
4. **CONFESS** your part of the conflict
5. Attack the problem, **NOT** the person



Proverbs 15:1 (Message)

- 1) **A gentle response defuses anger, but a sharp tongue kindles a fire.**



Restoring Fellowship

1. Talk to God **BEFORE** talking to the other person
2. Always take the **INITIATIVE**
3. **SYMPATHIZE** with their feelings
4. **CONFESS** your part of the conflict
5. Attack the problem, **NOT** the person
6. **COOPERATE** as much as possible
7. Emphasize **RECONCILIATION** not resolution



Unity in the Ecclesia

- It is your job to preserve **UNITY** in the Ecclesia
- **UNITY** is the soul of fellowship



Preserving Unity in the Ecclesia

1. Focus on what you have in **COMMON**



Romans 14:19 (NIV)

- 19) Let us therefore make every effort to do what **leads to peace** and to mutual edification.



Preserving Unity in the Ecclesia

1. Focus on what you have in **COMMON**
2. Be **REALISTIC** in your expectations
3. Choose to **ENCOURAGE** rather than to criticize



Romans 14:19-20 (Message)

- 19) So let's agree to **use all our energy in getting along with each other.** Help others with encouraging words;
- 20) don't drag them down by finding fault...



Preserving Unity in the Ecclesia

1. Focus on what you have in **COMMON**
2. Be **REALISTIC** in your expectations
3. Choose to **ENCOURAGE** rather than to criticize
4. Refuse to **LISTEN** to gossip
5. Practice **MATTHEW 18**
6. Support your **LEADERS**



1st Thessalonians 5:12-13 (Message)

- 12)** And now, friends, we ask you to **honor those leaders who work so hard for you**, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience.
- 13)** Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!

Your Journey was Meant to be Shared

FELLOWSHIP

**is one of God's
Purposes for You**

