



YOUR ROLE IN GOD'S MISSION

How To

CREATE A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

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Part One

Why Should You Create A Personal Mission Statement?

During my college days, I wrote a little booklet that contained this line in it: *“Life is like a coin. You can spend it any way you want, but you can only spend it once.”* My thinking on what it looks like to spend your life well has changed during the two-decades-plus since those days, but the reality of those words still rings true. There are no mulligans for what has already taken place. No rewriting history. No turning back time. No do-overs. No rewinds. Someday will be my last day, and my grace-driven aim is to have made the most of my life by spending it on things that matter the most to my God. None of us wants to waste our lives.

To be sure, our past is littered with waste. Our already-written history includes countless moments and many seasons in which we spent our lives on things that matter least. There is nothing we can do to rewind and make it right, but the grace of Jesus has made us right in God’s sight. There is nothing we can do to turn back time, but by grace we can redeem the time that yet remains. There is nothing we can do to change the past, but there is grace available to change for the future. Paul’s words to the Philippians likewise ring true, “But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13b,14)

One of the tools that can be helpful in staying focused on living an un-wasted life, which is the equivalent of living out your God-given purpose, is a “personal mission statement”. This is simply a short summary of why you exist, and for the Christ-follower, it is biblically-based so it is grounded in unchanging truth rather than on trendy cultural cues. Where better to turn than Scripture to find out why God made you and what God made you to do? After all, YOLO means something entirely different in societal circles than it does in the kingdom of God.

As I explain how a personal mission statement has proved to be helpful to me, let me do so in four parts as I answer four questions...

1. Part One: Why should you create a personal mission statement?
2. Part Two: What does it mean to have a personal mission statement?
3. Part Three: How can you make your own personal mission statement?
4. Part Four: What does it look like to live out a personal mission statement?

Let's begin.

Perhaps you are thinking, "*Why should I create a personal mission statement?*" While there are many reasons, let me suggest three of them...

- 1. It will help keep you focused on the MAIN THING.** It's surprisingly easy to lose sight of the reason we were made and start living for lesser things, temporary things, good-things-instead-of-best-things. A personal mission statement provides an ever-present awareness of what we're about and what we're after. By centering our attention on the "why" for our existence as Jesus-followers, we will less likely be pulled away by allurements or pushed away by derailments. In fact, it helps us better see how both the pleasurable things and painful things God ordains for our lives actually serve as a platform for living out our purpose...
- 2. It will provide with you with a lens for seeing EVERYTHING.** The overall, overarching reason for your existence never takes time off. It never pushes pause. It never goes on a break. This is a beautiful reality that you need to be reminded of: God can work through you anytime, anyplace, anyhow. All of your life – the good, the bad, and the ugly – should be used as a platform to accomplish your mission, to live out your purpose. God doesn't just send circumstances into your life; He sends you into circumstances to live for Him. Why you are here applies to wherever you are. What you were made for applies to whatever you do. Your life isn't a random, unplanned, meaningless chain of events ... it is filled with people, places and things, overflowing with opportunities to spend your life well by the grace of God for the kingdom of God to the glory of God. It. All. Matters.
- 3. It will hold you accountable to do SOMETHING.** Having a biblically-based, grace-driven, gospel-saturated personal mission statement can serve as a great resource

for examining how you are living your life. You look back at the past day, week, month or quarter to ask, *“What have I been doing to live out my purpose?”* You look ahead at the coming day, week, month and quarter to ask, *“What can I do to live out my purpose?”* Prayerfully asking some questions (and asking God to reveal accurate answers) about “why” you are on earth allows you to better see how you are stewarding your time, talent and treasure to help you better do what you were made to do. If you don’t know your purpose in life, it’s impossible to know if you’re fulfilling your purpose in life, and it’s much more of a risk to “coast” in life without being mindful or intentional about the things God can accomplish through you.

In a nutshell...

A personal mission statement serves as an ongoing gospel reminder that how you spend your time matters and to spend your time on what matters.

(Ex. Ephesians 5:15-21)

One final thought for today: Jesus had personal mission statements. No, He didn’t label them in that way, but Jesus made it clear that He knew His purpose for being on earth. He said things like, *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”* (Luke 19:10) And, *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”* (John 10:10) And, *“Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* (Matthew 20:28) I could easily point to a dozen more of these kinds of statements.

The point is this: Despite the crowds, the chaos, and the calendar that was jam-packed, Jesus never forgot why He was here. Everything He did worked towards His purpose. And He accomplished everything He came to do (John 17:4). Now, He graciously pardons us every time we fall short of our purpose, and graciously provides us with everything we need to fulfill our purpose. He modeled mission for us and now sends us into the mission, promising to go with us every step of the way. (Matthew 28:18-20) If life is like that coin, then the best way to spend it is to invest it in the purposes of God. Nothing you ever give to the kingdom of God will be wasted, especially your life.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- Why did you and I need Jesus to come to earth?
- What do the Bible verses from the following list state as “why” Jesus came to earth? Luke 19:10, John 10:10, John 18:37, Matthew 5:17, Mark 10:45, 1 Timothy 1:15, and 1 John 3:8.

- While we can't do everything Jesus did (IE He died on the cross for the sins of mankind), what are some things from Jesus' model for mission that we can follow?

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEPS: Think about the three “reasons why” listed in today's devotional, and consider how a personal mission statement would be helpful in these ways in your own life as you strive to follow the example of Jesus in carrying out the mission of God.

FOR MORE ENCOURAGEMENT:

Click The Link Below To Read John 3:16-21

<http://esv.to/John3:16-21>



Part Two

What Does It Mean To Have A Personal Mission Statement?

As a quick review, in Part One I suggested some reasons why a personal mission statement is a resource you should consider creating and using. The bottom line is: a personal mission statement serves as an ongoing gospel reminder that how you spend your time matters and to spend your time on what matters. It is something you can come back to again and again to remind you of the biblical truths about why you are here on this earth and what you are here to do.

To press in on this just a bit more, your personal mission statement is a summary of your role in God's mission. Let's be clear about that. It's His mission that you have been called into. Your mission in life is to take your unique place in carrying out God's mission. He has equipped you with spiritual gifts, natural talents and abilities, acquired skills and knowledge, personality traits, dreams and passions, opportunities, current circumstances, providential interactions, and a circle of influence to divinely position and prepare you to do what He has called you to do. All of this has been lovingly and wisely and strategically set up so you can be sent out for Him to further His kingdom agenda through your life. What a mind-boggling blessing it is to serve the most powerful King in the universe ... who also happens to be your heavenly Father!

So...

Today I'd like to share my own personal mission statement, the biblical basis for why I worded it the way that I did, and a brief look at how it helps in everyday, practical situations.

As I posted a few days ago, my personal mission statement is: *"I exist to know and make known Jesus so that God is honored in us and we are happy in Him."*

I spent several days during a sabbatical thinking about Bible verses that give definition to my existence, praying over how to formulate those verses into an easy-to-remember summary, and going through a number of drafts before landing on the language from this final version. But let me say this clearly: These words aren't magical. They aren't essential. They aren't scriptural. They do not equate with God's words ... they remind of God's words. Each specific part is representative of a specific truth from a specific verse in the Bible. Here is what they represent to me...

1. "To know" is grounded in a number of Bible verses, including Philippians 3:8 which says, *"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ."*

My mission begins with personally knowing Jesus and growing in my own relationship with Him because of the grace and forgiveness extended to me. I was made to know Him...

- To know His character.
- To know His mind.
- To know His authority.
- To know His power.
- To know His value.
- To know His mission.
- To know His glory.
- To know His commands.
- To know His kindness.
- To know His righteousness.
- To know His heart.

Out of the overflow of this growing knowledge of Jesus is the going forth of sharing Him with others. To tell of the surpassing worth of knowing Him to others is to first taste of this surpassing worth of knowing Him myself. Part of my purpose in life is to grow in my knowledge of Him and then grow up because of my knowledge of Him. It begins with me knowing, treasuring, enjoying, trusting and following Jesus myself in a personal, one-on-one relationship that He welcomes me into.

2. "To make known Jesus" is grounded in a number of verses, including Matthew 28:19-20 which says, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in*

the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

To have experienced the gospel oneself is to now be obligated to extend the gospel to others. This includes making Jesus known to those I personally and directly influence (addition) and equipping them to do the same with those they personally and directly influence (multiplication). One of my aims is to help others take the next step in their spiritual journey so they mature and multiply in their faith as they see and savor Jesus for themselves. I want to help others know Jesus and make Him known to others they know. More precisely, I want to help others discover for themselves who Jesus is so they too can experience His joy and invite others to experience it as well.

3. "So that God is honored in us" is grounded in a number of verses, including 1 Corinthians 10:31 which says, *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*

What that says to me is this: there is a way in which we can do everything in life so that God is honored through it. Namely, by handling the things of life in the manner that He intends. We enjoy the good things by expressing gratitude to Him and guarding against prioritizing them over Him. We endure the bad things by trusting Him as our all-powerful provider and looking to Him as our all-satisfying treasure. We experience all things with loving obedience to His commands as we follow His design for how and why and what we do with the lives we have been given.

Why do I know and make known Jesus? Firstly, so God gets glory from our treasuring Him, thanking Him, and trusting Him above all other things and in everything. What we do should always be motivated by our desire to honor God. As I strive to "know and make known Jesus" it is because I want my God to be made much of as we take pleasure in Him and praise Him. Which brings me to...

4. "And we are happy in Him" is grounded in a number of verses, including Psalm 37:4 which says, *"Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart"* and Psalm 16:11 which says, *"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."*

The greatest way to honor God is to be happy in God. To prefer Him. To treasure Him. To enjoy Him. To find in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit our greatest satisfaction. God wants us to be happy. He's the Author of happiness. It was His idea.

There is nothing you and I could ever dream up apart from Him that would come close to the intensity and duration of delight that He invites us into. It is full and lasting happiness. In part now; in completeness forevermore. The reason we can't stay happy very long is because we often look to something that was never intended to keep us happy very long. God knows how best to deliver enduring happiness, and He delivered it through Jesus.

Jesus isn't an add-on.
He isn't a bonus.
He isn't icing on the cake.
He isn't the bow on the box.
He isn't the finishing touch.
He's everything.

So, you add all of that up and you have my personal mission statement. Whew!

***This is what I ultimately want to see from my life:
An honored God and happy people.***

There are, of course, other verses that informed my thinking in crafting my personal mission statement such as 2 Corinthians 5:20 (which tells me I'm a 24/7 ambassador for Christ) and Matthew 22:34-40 (which tells me the two greatest commands are to love God supremely and love people secondly), among many others. But they all contributed in some way to those four parts being included in this summary statement.

As you can see from this brief unpacking, a small statement can serve as a reminder of many wonderful biblical truths. But what function does this reminder actually serve? Let me give you one quick scenario before I close out. Think of this scenario as typical of how it might be used in any and every scenario of life...

My personal mission statement is on the wipe-board in front of my home office desk and in a framed print behind me where I sit. It's a screensaver on my laptop and an image on the lock screen of my iPhone. It's taped to the mirror in my bathroom and appears at the top of each day's printed schedule. It's a bookmark in my Bible for my daily readings. So, when I head out to run with a friend, my mission is on my mind. "I'm not here primarily to run," I think to myself. "I'm here to make Jesus known in my friend's life with the aim of having my friend find happiness in God and God being honored because of our time together on the trails." I model the Christian faith and talk about the good news of Jesus

during our conversation. Running becomes vastly more than recreational; it is missional; because it is intentional.

See how that works? More on this in part four of the series, where I'll share to live out your stated purpose in everyday life ... in both "general" ways that all Christians are intended to live, and in "specific" ways that are unique to your calling in life. In part three (coming next), I'll walk you through a simple process for creating your own personal mission statement.

Until then, know that God made you for a purpose, equips you for that purpose, places you where He wants you to fulfill that purpose, controls the timing of every detail of your purpose, and helps you live out that purpose. You've been called into the most important work in the universe, and much of that is to simply be a faithful Christian presence doing what you're already doing.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- Which of the verses mentioned in today's devotion will you include as part of the basis of your own personal mission statement? What other verses would you add to these?
- How does it make you feel to know that God has called you to participate in His mission of love to redeem mankind? Excited? Honored? Nervous? Indifferent? Explain your answer.
- What would it look like for you to do the things you are already doing (work like, home life, recreational life, etc.) with a more missional mindset?

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEPS: Think through a typical day and make a list of ways you can model the Christian faith for others in a way that visibly and verbally shows them what it's like to know and follow Jesus.

FOR MORE ENCOURAGEMENT:

Click The Link Below To Read 1 John 2:1-6

<http://esv.to/1John2:1-6>



Part Three

How Can You Make Your Own Personal Mission Statement?

As I've unpacked in the previous two devotions in this series, a personal mission statement is a biblically-based summary of why you exist. It is an ongoing gospel-centered reminder of your role in God's mission to redeem mankind. The wording of a personal mission statement is in no way equal to the authority of God's Word, but rather represents truths from God's Word regarding your part in His kingdom agenda.

Today, let me walk you through the two parts of the process that I worked through to create my own personal mission statement. Before you begin, I strongly encourage you to pray about this. You should always seek God's guidance in every endeavor of life, but certainly something as important as attempting to distill Biblical truths into a statement about why you exist should only be undertaken with accompanying prayer!

Pray before you start. Pray during the process. Pray after you conclude. If the point of this is to summarize your role in God's mission, then the need to seek God's wisdom cannot be overstated. Pray. Pray. Pray. Here we go...

Part One: Foundation.

We do not have to guess why we are on earth. We do not have to speculate about the meaning of our lives. We do not have to act on a hunch or take a shot in the dark about our purpose. We. Can. Know. God wrote a book, and one of the things included in His book are instructions on why we are here and how we are to live while we are here. The foundation of your personal mission statement isn't your own intuition. In fact, your mission doesn't begin with you at all. It begins with the One who wrote the book and wrote your story before you were even born.

So, the first thing to do is to list at least a handful of key verses from the Bible which speak about the overall meaning of what God intends for you to do with your life as it relates to His purposes. Here are a few that I used myself to get you started...

Philippians 3:8
Matthew 28:19-20
1 Corinthians 10:31
Psalm 37:4
Psalm 16:11
2 Corinthians 5:20
Matthew 22:34-40
Philippians 1:20
Romans 8:29
Ephesians 2:8-10

There are others you could include, but I don't want to simply tell you what I think should be the Biblical basis for your personal mission statement. You should dive into God's Word and discover for yourself the truths that speak to your existence and speak to your heart as you strive to create a summary of what it would like for you to live your life well. But these will get you off to a great start. I encourage you to do these things...

- *Put the above verses into a document, print them out and consider their meaning.*
- *Read each one of them in their context with the surrounding verses from the Bible.*
- *Consider how none of them say "everything" about what your life is about, but as a whole they give you a clearer picture.*
- *Think about how various "life verses" fit together to work towards an overall purpose that can be lived out in every scenario of every day.*
- *Find other verses through your Bible concordance, cross references, and other study resources that could also contribute to your personal mission statement.*

This doesn't have to be a quick process, and, in fact, should not be. Linger over God's Word, and let it marinate in your mind. Write out key words, key phrases, key thoughts that start to appear. A few things that surfaced for me were...

- Glorifying and serving God.
- Pointing people to Jesus.
- Sharing the gospel.
- Equipping and encouraging others to fulfil their purpose.
- Loving God, loving people.
- Making disciples.
- Experiencing real joy.
- Being a 24/7 ambassador.
- Living with eternity in view.

After you have spent a few days exploring the life-giving words of God about why you were given life, move on to this next step...

Part Two: Formation.

While I didn't do any research or follow anyone else's process, I would imagine there are a number of ways you could structure a personal mission statement. Again, let me just refer to what I did. My mission statement is broken down into two parts which could be labeled in any of these ways...

What-Why

Penultimate-Ultimate

Secondary-Primary

1. "I exist to know and make known Jesus".

If you follow my example, you'll want to begin your personal mission statement with your "What"? The is the secondary goal that leads to the primary goal. It's not the ultimate end result, it's what leads to the ultimate end result. For me, the avenue to getting to my "why" (next section) is to know Jesus personally and make Jesus known so others can know Him personally. This part of the personal mission statement is incredibly important and sets up the main objective.

2. "So that God is honored in us and we are happy in Him."

This is what I'm after at all times: an honored God and happy people. It's the "Why" behind my "What". Perhaps saying it a different way will give some clarity: WHY do WHAT you do? For me, why know and make known Jesus? Because I want God / Jesus to be glorified supremely as people find their joy in Him. There are many wonderful things that God has planned for your life and my life, but they are all pointing

to something. They are all working toward something. And that something is God being glorified in our lives as we find our happiness in Him through Jesus.

So, for the structure of my personal mission statement, there is a primary goal and a secondary goal which is paramount to accomplishing it. Should you choose to assemble yours in a similar way, here are the three steps...

1. Label WHAT you are here to do.

(This is a secondary goal that leads to the primary goal.)

2. Transition between WHAT and WHY like this...

So that...

For...

Because...

3. Label WHY you do WHAT you do.

(This is the main objective, primary goal, end result.)

As you consider the wording, be sure to keep it as short as possible so that you can easily remember it and easily apply it. It can be complex without being complicated. It is my recommendation that you keep it to one sentence. And, again, this is the way that I created my personal mission statement. There are other ways. If you don't like this way, you can do a little research on Google and find other options.

There is one final part of a personal mission statement that I'll unpack in our final part of this series: How do you live out your stated mission? A mission statement really is more than What-Why. It's actually What-Why-How. The HOW is the practical part. It can involve and include many different things and tasks, which is why it is not included in the statement itself, lest it be far too long to remember and far too clunky to use! But the HOW is the thing that ensures the WHAT gets done so that the WHY is realized. So, in our next lesson we'll take a look at how to apply your mission statement "generally" in everything you do and "specifically" in everything you were uniquely called to do.

The bottom line is this: When you have a Biblically-based, ultimate goal in mind, everything you do has tremendous value and meaning because it is an outlet for accomplishing that goal. Washing dishes, while secondarily may be done because the sink is piling up with cups and plates, primarily becomes a tool for glorifying God as you

involve your kiddos while talking to them about the love of Jesus. You will begin to see all of life in a different way, because all of life is a precious platform for you to live out your purpose. There is nothing that cannot be used for the kingdom of God, and nothing that is used for the kingdom of God is ever wasted.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- If you were going to choose ten verses / passages from the Bible to serve as the basis for why you think God created you, what would they be?
- What are some Biblically-based things that might be considered “secondary” purposes of your life that would help to achieve an ultimate “primary” purpose?
- Without being too concerned with precise wording and based on the Bible, what do you think is the ultimate reason for your existence that everything you do should work towards?

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEPS: Work through the two parts of today's lesson to create your own personal mission statement.

FOR MORE ENCOURAGEMENT:

Click The Link Below To Read Ephesians 2:1-10

<http://esv.to/Ephesians2:1-10>



Part Four

What Does It Look Like To Live Out A Personal Mission Statement?

There is a beautiful wooden chair in our master bedroom that I glanced at just now as I was preparing to write. It is solid and sturdy. Well-crafted. We've had it for many years. Currently, it is propping open our door so the breeze from an open window doesn't slam the door shut. The chair is also piled up with dirty clothes that are waiting to be taken downstairs to the laundry room.

This chair is doing something; but it's not doing something it was designed to do. It was not intended to be used as a laundry basket or door prop. Whoever made the chair meant for it to be sat upon. Surely, it makes for a convenient option for how we are currently using it, but that's not the primary reason its maker put it together. Still, even knowing its main function, we use it more as a storage space than a seating place.

Knowing your role in God's mission is entirely different from fulfilling it. There is nothing wrong with being a laundry basket ... unless your Maker put you together to be a chair. A very real temptation for us is to settle for convenient options instead of God's intentions. That's why it is monumentally important to not merely know your purpose in life, but to be purposeful about living it out. As a way of "*stirring up one another to love and good works*" (Hebrews 10:24), let me share a few things about actually doing what you and I were actually made to do.

10 Thoughts About Living Out Your Personal Mission Statement

1. *Before you head out to live out your mission, talk it out with God.*

You will be much more purposeful and prepared for living out your "*this is why I'm here*" calling if you have spent time praying about it. After all, there is a direct

correlation between living well and praying well. Ask Him to give you opportunities and take away obstacles so you can do what He has placed before you to do on this specific day as He divinely brings circumstances and people into your pathway. Humbly and confidently asking God to make you helpful, mindful and fruitful for the day as you depend on Him is the solid foundation for living out your personal mission statement. As with everything else, when it comes to pursuing your purpose, *“pray without ceasing”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

2. *Display reminders of your personal mission in high-visibility places.*

Here's the reality that we all face: we are very likely going to get distracted and lose focus. This will happen over and over again because life is full of pressures and pleasures that seek, and sometimes demand, our attention. These distractions aren't necessarily in the way of God's mission for us, but the enemy can certainly use them to cause us to look away from God's mission for us. Having your personal mission statement – as well as a strong representative Bible verse – posted in various places you will see throughout the day will help you to see through the temporary nature of what you are doing to the eternal value of doing it to the glory of God and the good of people. (See Part 2 for examples of where I have my reminders posted.)

3. *The basic way to live out your mission every day is to model the Christian faith (1 John 2:6) and talk about the good news of Jesus (Mark 16:15).*

Or, as I commonly refer to it: *“Point to the Source.”* The circumstances, workload, schedule, community, and to-do list that you and I and all other believers have on any given day are going to be different from each other. Like snowflakes, no two sets of daily activities will be precisely the same. But what we have in common is the manner in which we do everything we do. We want to live in such a way that people see who Jesus is to us and who Jesus is through us. That is, we want to point to Him as the Source of our own hope, joy, wisdom and power for living (among other things), and invite them to find all they need for all they face in that same Source. Whatever the question, Jesus is the answer. Whatever the problem, Jesus is the solution.

4. *Your mission is carried out “generally” by using your HOW practices to get to your WHY purpose.*

What do the things in the following list have in common? Social media, hobbies, work activities, conversations, meals, cookouts, meetings, and commutes. Each of

these afford you the opportunity to love God, love people and share Jesus. You can glorify God in bad scenarios and good scenarios. You can pursue the happiness of others in God in waiting rooms, board rooms, and home rooms. The most influential thing you can do, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is to be a faithful presence right where God has placed you doing the “stuff” of everyday life with a missional mindset. Where does life take place? In the routine, mundane details of your everyday existence. When you start seeing these as opportunities to do good, you will never see them as ordinary again. From your personal mission statement, what did you list as WHY? Rely on Jesus to work toward that ultimate objective in the way you do the normal things of life.

5. *Your mission is like every other Christian's mission; it's also unlike every other Christian's mission.*

We all have many things in common in what we were called to do in this life. But your mission statement should also be lived out “specifically” in everything you were UNIQUELY called to do. This is where you differ from other believers. You have God-endowed spiritual gifts (Romans 12:3-8), God-ordained opportunities (Galatians 6:10), and God-given passions so you can do specific things at specific times at specific places to influence specific people. Figuring out this unique calling upon your life is beyond the scope of this devotion, but it's essential that I mention it. How exciting is it to think that God thinks the world needed someone like you to do something like He has planned for you?! For me, I currently have a writing ministry, speaking ministry and running ministry. What specifically has God hard-wired into you for this current season of life?

6. *God will tell you HOW to live out your mission; in fact, He already has.*

Where do you learn about your spiritual gifts? How will you know how to model the Christian faith? What are the things you should say to others about the good news of Jesus? What does it look like to express love for God and love for people? Everything you need to know about living ... period ... is found in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Nothing will better prepare you for living than spending time in the Bible. There are no shortcuts or substitutions for the Scriptures. If you want to make a difference in this world, then you must start by making time each day to read the Word of God. It is impossible to know HOW God wants you to live without knowing WHAT God says in the pages between Genesis and Revelation. That doesn't mean you need to know everything (nobody does), but it does mean you need the ongoing nutrition and instruction found inside The Book that God wrote.

7. *If you wait for a convenient time, you'll waste a lot of time.*

We can easily fall into this trap of thinking we are one season, one trip, one project, one holiday, one day away from getting serious and getting started in pursuing what God wants from our lives. Listen to me: life never slows down for long. What it does is pass you by. The days are long, but the years are short. Are you tracking with that? Do not make the mistake of thinking you've got plenty of time to focus on what matters most. Life is a vapor that will quickly disappear (James 4:14). But what you do with that evaporating life can last forever! Little is much in the hands of God, so with a sense of grace-driven urgency, do something today for the Kingdom of God. And for all the days that follow until God calls you home to say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant.*"

8. *Take a regular inventory of how you are shepherding your time, talent and treasure.*

A recurring, honest examination of how you are spending your life is a healthy and helpful rhythm that I strongly recommend. The importance of being a "*doer of the word*" (James 1:22-25) cannot be overstated, and reflecting back on the past day, week, month, quarter, or year is a good opportunity to celebrate all that God has done through your life. It's also a powerful (albeit painful) accountability step to identify places and spaces that could be better used to serve God's purposes in future days. This review time will likely include rejoicing, repenting and requesting as you depend on God's grace for both pardon of careless living in the past and power for careful living in the future.

9. *Your personal mission should be a lifestyle, not legalism.*

The danger with a series like this 4-parter that we are concluding in this post is that it can quickly become a "task" that we have to grit our teeth, summon our inner resolve, and "try harder to do better" at accomplishing. Please hear me say ... that's not what I'm saying! Living out your mission should be grace-driven, joy-producing, hope-fueled, and glory-experiencing. It should be a delight, not a duty. This should be the unfolding of the most epic story, the most epic journey, the most epic work in the universe as we find and fulfil our life's meaning. An un-wasted life should never feel like it's missing out or losing out or skipping out on things it would rather be doing. Rather, we should be pleased to know that you are doing the very thing you were made to do. It doesn't mean there won't be sacrifice. It doesn't mean there isn't suffering. It doesn't mean it will be without struggle. It doesn't mean the effort won't be strenuous. But you'll find that living for something bigger than yourself has

a rewarding sweetness to it.

10. You and I will frequently fail at this, but there is grace for this.

In previous parts of this series, I shared my mission statement: *"I exist to know and make known Jesus so that God is honored in us and we are happy in Him."* That's what I'm after: an honored God and happy people. So... Do I honor God in everything I do? Nope. Do I always help others find their happiness in Him? Nope. Do I TRY to do this all the time? Nope. Do I in every situation at least think about trying to do this? Nope. While I frequently do live out my purpose, I also frequently fail. Mission aborted. You have your own failures. Listen to me: Jesus is the only One who has ever, or will ever, successfully complete at every step, in every way, the mission of God. (John 17:4) And do you know why He did it? Because you and I will fail to do so. He lived perfectly on our behalf, died sacrificially in our place, so we could experience pardon for our failure to live as God intends and power to start anew to live by faith as God intends. We strive for living out God's grand purpose for our lives every day, and we rest in His grace for when we fall short.

During this 4-part series I have shared a lot of content with you (and there certainly is much more that could be said). Perhaps you are experiencing the "terrible trio" right now: The pressure to perform. The fear of failure. The obstacle of overwhelm. Let me summarize everything I've said in nine words...

Pray. Read the Bible. Do what God tells you.

That's your mission in a nutshell. That's why God made you. That's what you're here on the earth to do. Living out your purpose in the everyday details of life is basically living out the details of the Word of God while relying on the grace of God and trusting in the promises of God. God made you with an everyday purpose for your life. Jesus purchased everything you need to complete that purpose. The Holy Spirit goes with you everywhere to guide and empower you in your purpose. Everyday. Everything. Everywhere. Your Maker makes it possible for you to do what you were made to do. Don't you see? It's never been about what you can do for God; it's always been about what God has done for you. God made a difference in your life, so you can make a difference in the world.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- Which of the following is your biggest concern about your role in God's mission: the pressure to perform, the fear of failure, the obstacle of overwhelm? Why?

- What has God graciously done or promised to do regarding your concern? What is your biblical reference for this?
- Knowing that God has a purpose for your life, that Jesus has secured all you need for that purpose, and the Holy Spirit is with you in power and guidance to fulfil that purpose, what should you do next?

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEPS: Slowly and prayerfully work your way through the four parts of this series to create a biblically-based personal mission statement, think about what it would look like to practically live it out on “typical” days, and establish rhythms mentioned in today’s “HOW” article. Last, remember this: You don’t “do” to earn God’s favor; you experience it and enjoy it because Jesus has already “done” everything to grant God’s favor to you.

FOR MORE ENCOURAGEMENT:

Click The Link Below To Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-15

<http://esv.to/2Corinthians5:11-15>

Here is my personal mission statement formatted into an image that I display in various places as a visual reminder of the purpose of my life.

