

3 Keys to a Life Characterized by Supernatural Divine Appointments

A few days ago I sat two days in blistering Georgia heat cheering on a grandson playing All-Star baseball games. On the second day I discovered I was talking with the quarterback for Alabama's national championship football team of the past two years! Jalen Hurts' record as a freshman and sophomore of 26-2 is phenomenal and he's a most humble and kind individual as well. Of course, I concluded our time by giving him my personal testimony tract and snapping a photo together.

Years ago I intersected at the L.A. airport with my friend, Dr. Michael Brown, where we noticed Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall, sitting with his wife waiting to board our flight. Conversing, he declined my testimony tract "Being on the Court" yet shortly thereafter in engaging privately with his wife, she gladly received it and personally gave it to him!

When we relocated to the Nashville area, while waiting in a checkout line I noticed superstar Nicole Kidman standing next to me. We shared a delightful conversation ending with me giving her my tract "Sharing My Spiritual Journey." Weeks later I bumped into her with hubby, Keith Urban, giving them a copy of my book on child rearing, timely since they just had their second baby.

Are these coincidences?

Scripture tells us, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Frederick Mayer, biographer of the apostle Paul, says, "A

providence is shaping our end; a plan is developing in our lives; a supremely wise and loving Being is making all things work for the good.”

Years ago, I wrote a book called *Divine Appointments*, underscoring the premise that in yielding one’s life to Jesus Christ as Lord, we are no longer at the mercy of chance or fate. Living lives dependent on the Holy Spirit and aligned with Scripture, God supernaturally orchestrates situations with people so we can help them find abundant and eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Authentic Christians long to be used by God in the exciting adventure of lifestyle evangelism.

When I appeared recently on *The Jim Bakker* show discussing this topic, 1,500 people quickly ordered *Divine Appointments* to learn more. This shows us the hunger that is out there as “the harvest is the end of the world” (b).

3 Non-Negotiables

My passion is to inspire and equip God’s people to awareness of the providence of God constantly at work arranging opportunities to engage with others naturally, relationally and enjoyably in planting seeds for the gospel. There’s no striving, pressure or manipulation. We simply move in harmony with God’s plan as He takes the initiative to steer people our way to be transformed by the power of the gospel.

To encourage and equip Christians, churches and ministries across America, we prepared 5 24-minute videos on YouTube, “Loving Lifestyle Evangelism” as a free gift to bless the body of Christ after Billy Graham’s homegoing. I strongly encourage you to avail yourself of this resource.

If you desire your life to be characterized by supernatural divine appointments, follow these pointers.

1. Be patient.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he does not know how. For the earth bears fruit by itself: first the blade, then the head, then the full seed in the head. But when the grain is ripe, immediately he applies the sickle because the harvest has come" (Mark 4:26-29).

Church growth leaders state that the average person has about six or seven encounters with the gospel before coming to repentance and faith in Christ. In other words, conversion is a process. We are called to plant and water the seed, but it is only "God who gives the increase" (1 Cor. 3:7b).

A premier evangelist is Greg Laurie, son in the faith to the late Billy Graham. Being patient with the dynamics of the conversion process is a challenge even for him.

He recently admitted, "When God tells me I need to be patient when it comes to sharing my faith, it's not that easy for me. I like results!"

2. Be praying.

The Bible instructs us, "Continue in prayer, and be watchful with thanksgiving, while praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may reveal it clearly, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom towards those who are outside, wisely using the opportunity" (Col. 4:2-5).

Jesus declared, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send out laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:37).

We should pray for boldness and opportunities for ourselves and others to consistently share the gospel. Pray for

Christians, especially pastors, to not merely preach about the transformative power of the gospel but intentionally engage in sharing it; and, pray for the salvation of loved ones, friends and associates to be convicted and turn to Jesus Christ.

Contrary to what some hold as a theological position where God sovereignly and arbitrarily predestines people for heaven and hell and there's nothing we can do about it, multitudes believe that God calls us to "stand in the gap" by praying for lost people for whom Christ shed His precious blood. We should pray that lost people, who are His purchased possession, be drawn by the Father and for the Holy Spirit to "convict" them of "sin and of righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8).

Christian author J. Oswald Sanders said it clearly: "It is doubtful that any person is saved apart from the believing prayers of some saint." Rejecting fatalism and passivity, may we pray and then put into practice our sacred duty as "ambassadors for Christ ... as we implore you in Christ's stead: Be reconciled to God!" (2 Cor. 5:20).

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" (-15).

3. Be prepared.

Scripture directs us, "Always be ready to give an answer to every man who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, with gentleness and fear" (1 Pet.3:15). For those who argue from this passage that we should be reactive and wait until people "ask" about salvation, the overwhelming majority of Scriptures direct us to be proactive in sharing our faith.

Our Christian life is filled with God-given opportunities to share the gospel with the right person at the right time. They may seem like random encounters but in fact they have been carefully arranged by the Holy Spirit. Do we expect them,

recognize them, and are we prepared when they come?

For over 45 years, I have made use of my personal testimony tract and encourage others to do likewise. It's the easiest way to share the gospel. I've invited tens of thousands to "check out my spiritual journey" with only a handful declining.

The towering figure of Christianity, Charles Spurgeon, said it best: "When preaching and private talk are not available, you have a tract ready! Get good striking tracts, or none at all. But a telling, touching gospel tract may often be the seed of eternal life. Therefore, do not go out without your tracts."

Here's the deal: In the next 365 days, an average of 2.5 million Americans will die with a large percentage going into an eternity without Christ to experience the horrors of hell that Jesus described. "The love of Christ compels us" (2 Cor. 5:14) to evangelize these lost sheep for whom Christ gave His life.

May my "chance" encounter with Jalen Hurts, Alabama's "Roll Tide" quarterback encourage you afresh in the joy of obeying the Great Commission. It's simply one of thousands of divine appointments I've fulfilled. I encourage you to "follow me as I follow Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1) in bringing the transformative message of the gospel to others as you learn to recognize His "hidden hand" directing you daily.