

5 Burning Questions to Discover Your Destiny in 2017

Finding and fulfilling your God-given destiny is not a matter of chance but choice. You have to make quality decisions on a consistent basis to enter into the unique plan of God for your life.

For over four decades, I've given my best to help people enter into the special call of God for their lives. That's my passion! For many years, I led a ministry called "People of Destiny International" that catapulted people into positions of influence all over this nation and abroad.

Fulfilling your destiny is not automatic but begins when you're rooted in the reality that God has a custom-designed destiny for your life. "Your eyes saw me unformed, yet in Your book all my days were written, before any of them came into being" (Ps. 139:16).

Convinced that God has a unique plan for your life, break out of mediocrity (this word means "halfway up the mountain"), step out of passivity and fulfill the assigned task He has ordained uniquely for you.

Obviously, the indispensable first step toward taking hold of your destiny is to make certain that you are, indeed, an authentic Christian. You have, in reality, yielded your life to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and have no hesitancy declaring it.

Recently when quarterback Lamar Jackson accepted Louisville's first Heisman Trophy for the best football player in the nation, he boldly declared, "I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Without Him, none of us would be here tonight!"

5 Burning Questions

1. "Will I affirm the Bible as the authoritative, final authority for every area of my life?"

There can be no compromise or hedging here. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Look around at the shipwrecked lives of many professing Christians because they did not nail this one down. Miss the first button on a shirt or dress, and everything else gets thrown off!

Billy Graham has always been my hero. Reading in his biography and autobiography, he shares his intellectual struggles in a Florida Bible college when he had doubts about the veracity of God's Word. The turning point came when he placed the Bible on a tree stump and committed himself to accept and obey it even when it was difficult.

Early on in my ministry, I had a providential encounter with Dr. Graham in the lobby of a Washington, D.C., hotel. When we spoke I asked him if there was one thing he would pass on to me and 2,000 young people I was ministering to each week. Without hesitation, he pointed to his Bible and with his piercing blue eyes spoke to me words I never forgot, "Stay in the book, young man. Stay in the book!"

2. "Will I choose to be a servant of others and die daily to selfish desires?"

When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples prior to the Last Supper, He was not performing a foot-washing service but rather setting an example for us to follow. In a world that emphasizes sacrificing others and serving self, we embrace the upside-down kingdom lifestyle of sacrificing self and serving

others.

Christian leader Tim Keller puts it this way, "The greatest moments in our Christian life are not when we think less of ourselves but when we think of ourselves less."

Wasn't it a beautiful example recently when Pope Francis celebrated his 80th birthday by reaching out to homeless people and sharing breakfast with them?

Or how about Dolly Parton witnessing the horrors of the recent Tennessee wildfires and pledging huge sums of money to help the victims, plus organizing a telethon to raise millions of dollars to help people devastated by the disaster?

I have a plaque in my office that serves as a constant reminder of the importance of giving myself to others: "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to another human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I will not pass this way again."

3. "Will I seek to discover, develop and deploy my spiritual gifts and God-given talents?"

The value of your life as a Christian will be greatly determined by the degree to which you use what God has given you. Stated differently: "What you are is God's gift to you. What you make of yourself is your gift back to God."

Remember the parable about the distribution of talents? The two servants who developed their talents were commended and given more. The one who let his lie dormant was severely rebuked and eventually lost what he had (Luke 19:11-27).

"As everyone has received a gift, even so serve one another with it, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10). So find your gifting through placement in the local church and let leaders help you get going.

Additionally, I encourage you to invest in the perennial No. 1 best-seller worldwide titled *StrengthsFinder*. This amazing book will help you identify your particular strengths in life so you can become all God intended you to be!

4. "Will I embrace discipline as a non-negotiable in becoming the person God has called me to be?"

"The soul of the sluggard desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent will be made fat" (Prov. 13:4).

It's one thing to hear inspiring preachers tell us to "dream big and believe for big achievements" in life. It's another to translate desires through discipline into what God plants in our hearts.

America's most prolific inventor was Thomas Edison. I once visited his summer home. Here's his counsel: "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and disguised as work."

Scripture challenges us with these words, "Do you not know that all those who run in a race run, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain it" (1 Cor. 9:24). The emphasis is not on the singularity of the prize but the attitude of the runner. We must embrace discipline in our lives in order to fulfill our destiny.

My grandson who was adopted from Nicaragua is now 12, and a couple years ago, he took up gymnastics. I am greatly challenged by his discipline and dedication, as he eagerly devotes over 20 hours weekly in training, already winning awards in regional competitions.

Decide that whatever God calls you to do, you will do it "heartily" to eventually "receive the reward" (Col. 3:23-4).

Remember: "Success is nothing more than a few simple disciplines practiced every day," said Jim Rohn.

Finally, to discover your destiny, ask yourself this question.

5. "Will I persevere in the face of setbacks?"

Scripture tells us that "a just man falls seven times and rises up again," (Prov. 24:16). How about you? While there are legitimate times to bring closure to an endeavor, far too often Christians "throw in the towel" when the going gets tough.

Let me encourage you not to waste time brooding over yesterday's failures and mistakes. It's OK to look back long enough to glean a lesson from a mistake, but there's no need to build a monument to it! When you're driving your car, you have to glance in the rear-view mirror occasionally, but if you keep your eyes there instead of on the road in front of you, you'll inevitably crash!

Business Insider has a very inspirational article titled "21 Highly Successful People Who Rebounded After Getting Fired."

I encourage you to read it to cultivate resiliency in your Christian life.

I also encourage you to read chapter 2 of *Bullseye Challenge* and watch the accompanying video, which will inspire you to keep on pressing on in the new year.

Here's the deal: God has a tremendous destiny for you and will do all He can to help you discover it for His glory. Take to heart what you've read and remember this promise from Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Go for it in 2017!