

How You Can Enter 2019 With Purpose

Traditionally a new year is a time for planning, making resolutions and writing down goals for what you want to accomplish. There's nothing magic about a new year that guarantees better things ahead, but it does offer a reminder that doing the same things will not lead to different results. If you want to enter 2019 with purpose, you must do it intentionally.

Conventional wisdom is that most New Year's resolutions are discarded by about Jan. 11. There's nothing wrong with making such resolutions, but I encourage you to look higher. Bigger. Farther ahead. Instead of asking "What do I want to accomplish this year?" ask "What does God want to do in me and with me this year?"

Whether last year was challenging, painful, boring or wonderful, God is not finished with you or with your purpose for His kingdom. If you're breathing, He has something yet for you to do. How do you discover that? How do you enter 2019 with purpose—His purpose for you?

My Wake-Up Moment

Over the past several weeks, my own heart has been stirred and challenged about what God is asking of me and Dr. Carol Ministries. During one particularly meaningful prayer time, He spoke clearly to my soul; "Your vision is too small!" It was one of those unusual but arresting times when I *knew* God had spoken.

I believe that's God's message for you too. YOUR vision is too small!

Remember that God's purpose for you has nothing to do with

your comfort or worldly success. Although He weeps with your pain and feels your struggles, His purpose for you is that you become like His Son Jesus, and then that you be useful in His kingdom. He can—and will—use everything you experience to accomplish those purposes if you let Him.

His purpose for you is also not primarily about you. Frankly, wouldn't it be rather small and meaningless if you got to the end of your life and were comfortable, but never made any positive impact on others?

Let me suggest two questions to ask, and a two-part prayer to pray, that will help you discover and experience God's purpose for you for this coming year.

Questions to Ask

Asking the right questions can put you in the right place to move forward. Questions focus your mind in the right direction and direct your attention to the right things.

In your prayer time, in your journal and as you think about any goals or plans for this coming year, consider these questions.

1. Whom has God built me to be?

There is nothing you have experienced and no part of who you are that need be wasted. Your genetic makeup, your personality, your childhood, your struggles and triumphs—God is using every bit of it in building you to be someone special, unique, with a specific role in His kingdom.

This is not about some big important thing at some distant future time; it's about you becoming the person He created you to be. Whether that's being the parent of a child who demands special care, encouraging someone with a similar struggle as you have, creating something unique to bless others or serving in a specific larger way, He made you for something.

Look at your experiences, your desires, your interests, your skills, your personality. What might all that be saying about who God needs you to be? What role has He created you to fill?

And as a bonus, give God permission to be in charge of your “continuing education.” He will not fail to prepare you for what He needs you to do.

2. Whom is God sending me to help?

Remember that God’s purpose for you is not primarily about you; it’s about someone or something bigger and beyond you.

Whose pain do you feel? Whose needs do you notice? Who do you empathize with? What problem keeps you awake at night? Whom would you help if you could? What is it in you that others seem to desire or embrace?

Frederick Buechner famously said, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

To whom is God sending you? That may be someone in your own home. Or it may be someone or many someones far beyond anything you have yet imagined.

A Two-Part Prayer

As you pray about these matters, let me suggest two parts for your prayer:

1. Jesus, Help Me!

The purpose God has created you for will be too big for you. If you could accomplish it on your own, it’s not God-sized.

When you hear from God, “Your vision is too small,” be ready for Him to move you toward something that feels impossible. The impossible may be an indication it’s God at work.

2. What step do You want *me* to take next?

Accomplishing what God has prepared you for will not happen without struggle, delay and effort. If you see someone doing something for God's kingdom that makes a great impact, it's usually "a 20-year overnight success." What you are responsible for is taking the next step, doing today what is in front of you to do.

When you see something in front of you to do, just do it. When God answers this part of your prayer with some step to take, just say yes.

I pray you experience God's best for you in 2019—not in terms of health and wealth (though I pray for provision and well-being for you), but in terms of meaning and growth and fulfillment.

Your vision is too small! Let God give you something bigger. Enter 2019 with purpose. {eoa}

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