

The Supernatural Secret to Fulfilling Your God-Given Destiny

The young woman standing before us was very beautiful, gifted and articulate as she shared her passion and vision for ministry. Many in the conference that week had been drawn by her smile and warm personality as they engaged in networking opportunities for national ministry initiatives.

No one would have guessed she had battled to overcome a very difficult childhood and young adult life, which had severely impacted her ability to enjoy a deeply personal love relationship with her Lord. Her transparency and vulnerable sharing in the last session of our meetings were met with many loving friends gathering around her to pray for God's healing and full restoration.

Regardless of how we look on the outside, the size and scope of our ministry or the crowds of people surrounding us, each of us may struggle at some point in life with damaged love receptors. Our archenemy Satan is keenly aware that if he can distance us from the love of God, we will be unsuccessful at loving ourselves or others, causing us to lose heart. No doubt, that's why Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers:

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ,

though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God (Eph. 3:14–19, NLT).

We have the potential to be dynamic and effective servants in the kingdom of God. He longs to move us from a place of isolation and loneliness to experience the fullness of life and power found only through being deeply rooted in His forever love.

God's love for us is not some fleeting infatuation that's here today and gone tomorrow. He allowed His Son to be mocked, ridiculed, slapped in the face, spit upon, cruelly beaten, stripped bare and crucified on a cross to purchase His treasured children. As Christ was preparing to wash the disciples' feet just before He went to the cross for them, the beloved disciple John recorded for us, "Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love" (John 13:1, NIV). God Incarnate, Immanuel—God with us—not only stooped to wash our feet but died to atone for our sins.

It all sounds too arrogant and amazing to believe that Abba Father would surrender heaven's best for earth's worst, but what is the alternative. We certainly couldn't imagine that it was our goodness rather than His grace or our merit rather than His mercy! Believing in His great love for us is not nearly as arrogant as believing anything else.

In *The Message*, Eugene Petersen paraphrases the last half of 2 Timothy 1:9 in this way: "We had nothing to do with it. It was all his idea, a gift prepared for us in Jesus long before we knew anything about it."

What transformational power we will experience if we not only embrace but daily become more deeply rooted in and captivated by this multi-dimensional love!

The secret to fulfilling our destiny and growing to spiritual maturity is to be more deeply rooted in the soil of the unknowable, unsearchable love of God. Comprehending Christ's love does not come naturally but supernaturally. It is an unending process because it is unknowable. As our capacity to receive and share His love grows, He keeps filling us again and again.

One of our greatest hindrances is defective receiving mechanisms that have become damaged or totally dysfunctional.

- You may have grown up in a home where love was nonexistent or rarely if ever expressed.
- You may have known only anger and abuse before coming to Christ.
- Your love receptors may have been damaged by bias and prejudice, or cruelty and isolation.
- Perhaps you struggle with the pain of loss, bitter disappointment and broken relationships, resulting in battered hearts.
- Many may bear biological father/mother wounds or suffer with spiritual lesions of the heart that were caused by religious/church leaders.
- Or you may have simply found yourself in a dry, barren place for so long, you wouldn't recognize a God embrace if it knocked you off your feet.

The extravagant, demonstrative love of God defies description and has the power to expand wide enough to draw you into His embrace. It is long enough to reach you no matter how far you may run and try to hide. Christ came down from the highest heavens to reach into the depths of your soul and repair every damaged receptor cell of your heart.

God's love is not linear or limited but voluminous and overflowing. Holy Spirit does not want you to experience a temporary emotional touch, but He desires for you to develop a deep root system that goes down into the soil of God's Word

and allows you to be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God!

How full is that? It's incomprehensible! His love is not a stagnant pond or even a flowing river. Christ's love is a limitless spring of living water that flows from the throne of God. Throughout eternity, we'll never fully know, nor will we ever exhaust the immensity of His love.

The prophet Isaiah, prophesying of Christ, said He would heal, liberate, comfort, beautify, bring joy and clothe us in praise, so we "might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified" (see Isa. 61:1-4 and Luke 4:18-19).

The world's tallest tree is the California redwood, which can easily grow to a height of 300 feet. Redwood tree roots are very shallow, often only five or six feet deep. Yet they compensate for it in width, sometimes extending up to 100 feet from the trunk. They thrive in thick groves, where the roots can intertwine and even fuse together. That is part of our strength in the kingdom of God as we love and support one another, but we can't survive on this love alone. In fact, our greatest strength is born in God's deeper love for us and our reciprocal love for Him.

There is another tree that grows in South Africa's dry, desert environment which stands 20 to 30 feet tall, but its root system is at least six times that long. The roots can reach as far down as 223 feet, making them the deepest known roots in the world. They are powerhouses at sucking up water and nutrients. It is also nicknamed the "tree of life" because nearly every part of it is useful to humans and animals. The name of this impressive tree is the shepherd's tree!

Allow the Holy Spirit to deeply root you in the Shepherd's love, so that you might extend His love and support to others all around you—inside and outside the church walls! {eo}

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