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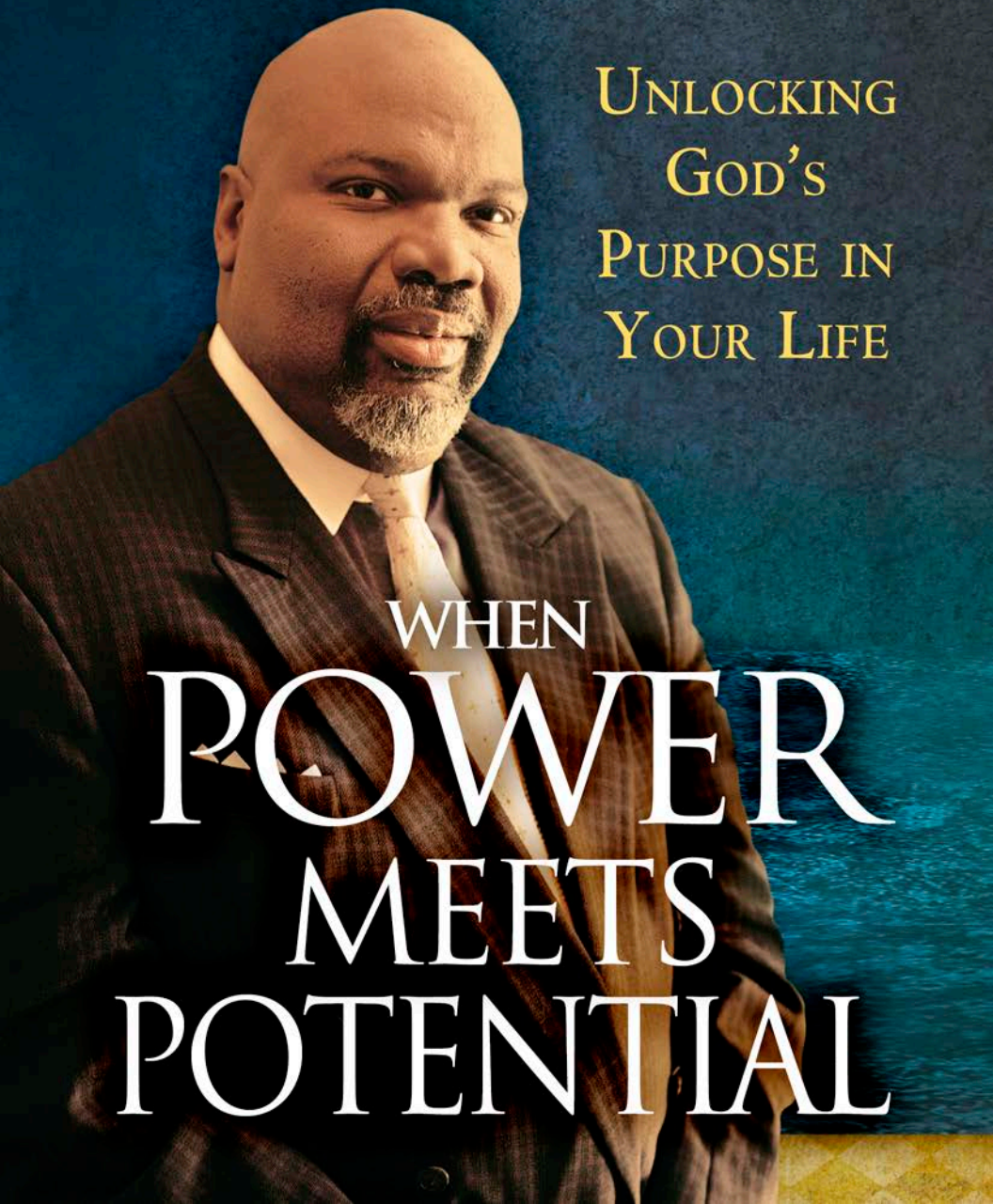
T.D. JAKES



UNLOCKING GOD'S PURPOSE IN YOUR LIFE

WHEN POWER MEETS POTENTIAL

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T.D. JAKES

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INTRODUCTION

I am absolutely convinced that God is extending an unparalleled invitation to every believer at this unique moment in history. It's an invitation to step into your identity, embrace your destiny, and fulfill your purpose. For too long we've settled for too little. I've written this book to excite your mind and expose you to some radical new normals. The old normal isn't working if you currently define your life as purposeless and powerless. It is downright illegal for you, a child of God, to live this way when so much has been provided, and so much remains still untapped and available.

Make no mistake, new realms of power and anointing are not reserved for the super-spiritual or superlative saints—promotion is for everyone. God's eyes are not roaming throughout the earth, zeroing in exclusively on pastors, preachers, and evangelists. The Scriptures give us a different story.

> *For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him…* (2 Chronicles 16:9 NIV).

Consider this verse for just a moment. There is no mention of profession or placement; *only* posture of the heart. The Lord's eyes are searching for hearts fully committed to Him and His

cause on the earth. These are the hearts that will fulfill purpose. When they are invited into a new level, people with hearts like this have what it takes to sustain that dimension of glory. These are the people who catch the gaze of God.

Will you catch His gaze? In this verse we also see a promise of power to those hearts that are fully committed to Him. Understanding this is vital. Your wholehearted devotion and commitment to God is what actually positions you for the divine moments that call forth your potential, strengthening and empowering you to fulfill your divine purpose.

I pray the following pages would remind you of the journey you began the moment you were born. In fact, your purpose preceded your coming into the world. Just as God called Jeremiah in the womb, He has called you in the same way.

> *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations* (Jeremiah 1:5).

Your journey began before birth. And now it's time for you to embrace it every day of your life. Apostle Paul gives us a glimpse of what this journey looks like, as he describes God's only desired travel plan for you—*from glory to glory* (see 2 Cor. 3:18). It's time for you to step into these new dimensions of glory, anointing, and power. It's time for you to recognize moments of divine visitation and run toward the supernatural promotion that's being presented your way. It's time for your potential to collide with God's power and release your purpose. That's what the world is waiting for—a people who actually step into their ordained assignment and fulfill their divine purpose.

You have untapped realms of ability, giftedness, and potential that are just waiting for one moment, one collision, one touch of God's power.

You have untapped realms of ability, giftedness, and potential that are just waiting for one moment, one collision, one touch of God's power. Too many people are running around searching for purpose, when in fact purpose is wrapped up in their potential. When your potential is realized and released, your purpose can be fulfilled. I want to help position you for these moments that change everything.

This book is for anyone who is hungry to experience a shift. A change. A transition. Elevation. Promotion. What you've always known and how you've always done life is changing. There's a meeting scheduled. Power is on its way. Elijah's getting ready to throw a mantle on you. You won't be able to keep plowing the field after you've collided with a prophet. Your moment is at hand, and this moment changes everything.

While reading the pages ahead, ask the Spirit of God to lead and guide you. Invite Him to give you clarity. Elijah and Elisha are examples. Most likely, you're not a plower being called to be a prophet. We're simply mining the multi-dimensional principles that are observable in this story. This is not your handbook on how to be a doctor on a new level, or how to be a plumper at a new level, or how to be a school teacher on a new level, or how to be a lawyer on a new level. I can't share out of what I don't have.

You have a specific calling and purpose. I'm giving you basic principles that will prepare you to release your unique potential.

When you step into the new level, get the training. Pursue the instruction and teaching. Go after everything that will help you develop that potential. I'm here to coach you, equip you, prepare you, and arm you. I want to arm you, spiritually, to say "Yes" when power passes by. I want to sharpen your spiritual sight to recognize what is going on behind the *seen* and respond correctly on your day of visitation.

This book is all about the meeting of power and potential. I'll give you some glimpses of what this new level of living looks like, but my main goal is to help you work through the transition. When power comes, I want you to be ready. I want you to recognize your moment. Yes, there will be natural circumstances that set it up. But even more deeply and profoundly, I want to help tune you in to the spiritual dimensions of transition. You need to recognize what looks right, smells right, sounds right, and ultimately is your moment.

Above all, you must be ready to receive and run after the very touch that releases your potential: *God's power.*

Part I

KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

…Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him **(1 Kings 19:19).**

Chapter 1

YOU ARE ON PURPOSE

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them **(Psalm 139:13-16).**

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago **(Ephesians 2:10 NLT).**

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope" **(Jeremiah 29:11 ESV).**

You Have a Purpose

Your hands have formed me and made me… (Job 10:8).

You have a purpose.

You were created *on purpose*.

You were formed, fashioned, and knit together by a skilled Craftsman, not some arbitrary cosmic explosion.

You are not an accident.

You are not an incident.

You are not a mistake.

You are not just a glob of protoplasmic material that is the result of a reckless night or a weekend between two passionate lovers.

You are not just a mere mixing together of DNA.

You have a divine purpose. You were allowed access into this dimension of life by the nod of the Creator Himself, that you would be strategically placed at this time, at this age, in your gender, in your ethnicity, with your gifting, and with your talent for God's divine purpose.

Even the wealthiest person on the planet could not offer up any suitable form of tender that could purchase *purpose*. Surely they wish purpose could have a dollar value assigned to it, because then the relentless nagging of their souls could be silenced. They could rest easy knowing that the one unknown of life has been secured. Purpose is priceless, while purposelessness is very costly.

You can live in this world and make all the money you could ever dream of and be as beautiful as you want and be as educated as you please and accomplish whatever you want to, but if you die without accomplishing your purpose, you are a failure, a reject and a fool.

The Root of Purposelessness

> *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God"* (Psalm 14:1).

The fool has said, "There is no God, there is no purpose, there is no meaning." He further adds, "I can do my own thing, go my own way, live my own life."

The fool who says in his heart, "There is no God" has essentially said, "There is no purpose." To divorce one's perspective from the reality of a Creator, a Master Designer, and a Purpose-Author, one is rejecting purpose and meaning as a whole. This is no small statement because it is no small action. The repercussions of saying, *"There is no God"* are far-reaching into every arena of our lives and society. It is downright deadly to reject the reality of a Creator, for it is that very Creator who assigns value and purpose to the created. If the created is without a Creator, then who or what assigns value or purpose to the created? There are no constants. There's nothing certain. We are without anchors. No one knows who they are, because they are detached from the truth of *Whose* they are.

The value of your Creator should cause you to reconsider your own worth and value.

When Genesis 1 becomes a fairy tale and we are disconnected from the fact that we were created in the *"image and likeness of God,"* (see Gen. 1:26) that we were in fact hand-crafted in the image of the perfect Craftsman, purpose*less*ness abounds. Now, more than ever, we need this vision of the Creator and created; for as the Scripture says, *"Where there is no vision, the people perish"* (Prov. 29:18 KJV).

The world perishes because of the purposelessness of its people; people perish because they live without vision. I want to invite you to consider the vision of your Creator. As mentioned earlier, you are not some type of cosmic accident. You were hand-crafted and custom-made by a perfect Creator. The value of your Creator should cause you to reconsider your own worth and value. God did not make you in the image of an animal. He did not create you in the image of an angel. Rather, He created you in His very own image and His likeness. Time after time, Scripture invites us to consider the unlikeness of God.

> *Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods?...* (Exodus 15:11).
>
> *Lord God of Israel, there is no God in heaven or on earth like You…* (2 Chronicles 6:14).
>
> *Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high* (Psalm 113:5).

Because God radically stands out and above everything and everyone else in created order, consider the precious value that someone created in *His* image and likeness carries. *This someone is you*.

God Created You Uniquely

> *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness…"* (Genesis 1:26).

Once you realize that you were created on purpose, and created in the image of the Creator, you begin to recognize that there are secrets stored up inside you. These are the very secrets

that must be discovered and unleashed to a purposeless planet and a purposeless people.

There are secrets inside you that God has planted, secret talents and secret gifts and secret wisdoms that have been divinely orchestrated. These gifts, these talents, these abilities, these wisdoms, these solutions, these creativities—these are uniquely *yours.* God the Creator is multi-dimensional enough to create you uniquely. Trust His design. The moment you start to embrace how you have been formed and fashioned is the moment you step into the very purpose you were created for. God is not the author of prolonged purposelessness; you are. One of the most prevalent enemies to you stepping into your purpose is the downright deception that "the grass is greener." In other words, something in someone else causes you to reject, and ultimately neglect the unique purpose within you. This keeps you exactly where the enemy wants you, and sadly, where the world cannot afford to keep you. You cannot make a difference sitting off in a dark corner somewhere, wishing that you were someone else.

Stop, stop, stop wanting to be somebody else. Do not insult your Creator by insulting His creation. You were fearfully and wonderfully made. Can you even fathom what the psalmist is expressing by using those words—*fearfully and wonderfully?* (See Psalm 139:14.) You were created with awe. God didn't just throw you together, stand back and say, "This looks good." Because God fashioned you in His very image and likeness, He has a right to stand back and actually awe His own creation. Why? It's simply God standing in awe of His own handiwork; God awe-ing God. This is how He looks upon *you.*

In fact, God considers you a "masterpiece" (see Eph. 2:10 NLT). God made you the way He wanted to make you so He

could use you at a particular time in a particular way; and if you start trying to be like somebody else, you're going to miss *your purpose*.

People don't miss their purpose and bypass destiny because God decides to take it away; they miss purpose because they fail to invest in *their* purpose. One of the greatest ways we fail to invest in what God has wired into our DNA is through rejecting who we have been uniquely created to be and what we have been created to bring to this moment in history.

You Have What it Takes

> *His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness…* (2 Peter 1:3).

You have everything you need to do what you've been designed to do and be who you were created to be. I repeat, you have everything you need to accomplish your purpose. If God needed you to be tall, He would have made you tall. If He needed you to be better looking, He would have made you better looking. If He needed you to have a voice to sing, He would have given you a voice to sing. Everything about you was designed with intentionality. In fact, your design is directly connected to your purpose. If you neglect your design and refuse to celebrate *how* you were made, you will never step into *who* you were made to be. We have no right to question the Potter about how He fashioned and molded the clay.

In Romans 9:20 (NIV), Paul directly confronts this issue of questioning the Maker about how the creation was made. He writes,

> *But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"*

God knew what He was doing when He created you like He did. He gave you the right IQ and He gave you the right personality. He gave you the right temperament. Do not despise your design, for the Designer made you a certain way so that you could accomplish a certain purpose. Like I said, the more you disregard your design and continue to want to be like someone else, the more you distance yourself from stepping into your created purpose. You, *as you are,* have got what it takes to *be* who God has created you to be. Yes, get educated. Yes, get equipped and trained. Yes, pursue knowledge, learning, and wisdom. Scripture tells us to pursue these things, as anybody can have as much of these things as he or she so desires. Just don't despise who God has created *you* to be.

The Designer made you a certain way so that you could accomplish a certain purpose.

Start believing this. You won't need as much counseling. You won't need as much therapy. You won't be as intimidated by other people. You won't be jealous of other people. If you understand your purpose, you will live in that purpose and you will discover your gifts and your talents and what you were put here to do.

Dealing with the Lie

> *Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you* (Psalm 25:5 NLT).

And finally, whatever you've been through and whatever weaknesses you have, and whatever issues you've had—do not allow those weaknesses to abort your mission. Everyone's failed. Everyone messes up. Everyone's slipped, fallen, gotten up, fallen again, gotten up again, maybe wandered around in the dark for a season, moved on, etc. The devil is a liar, and he would love to deceive you right out of your destiny. One of the main tools he uses is reminding you of issues, hang-ups, setbacks, and sins. Your comeback should trump his lies *every* time. Your past is under the blood of Jesus. Your sins were dealt with at Calvary. God's not surprised by your weaknesses; this is why He promises strength! God's not caught off guard by your setbacks and problems.

It's never too late to get back on the path to purpose.

Remember, it's not your weaknesses and failures that have the potential to abort your mission, it's how you see and respond to them. If you believe your weaknesses can abort your purpose, you will live in agreement with that lie. Nothing—absolutely nothing—can separate you from God's purpose for your life *unless* you start agreeing with lies. It's this type of agreement that

causes you to veer off the path God has set for you. If you've been believing these lies, I encourage you to start disagreeing with the liar *today*. It's never too late to get back on the path to purpose.

I repeat—you have a divine mission to accomplish. You cannot allow *anything* to come between you and your purpose. In the pages ahead, we are going to look at the unique exchange that took place between Elijah and Elisha. As Elijah's time on earth was concluding, it was Elisha's turn to step up. If you need an example of someone who refused to let anything come between him and his purpose, this plowman-turned-prophet is your model. In fact, he is your mandate. I'm calling for a company of Elishas to rise up in this hour, recognize their moment of visitation, and start running toward the divine purpose God has ready to unleash to the world through their lives.

Reflections

1. In what ways is your design (how you were made) directly connected to fulfilling your purpose in life?

2. Why is it an insult to the Creator to question the way He made you?

3. How can your weaknesses and failures keep you from fulfilling your purpose?

Chapter 2

GET READY FOR YOUR MOMENT

So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him… **(1 Kings 19:19).**

Prepare for Your Destiny-Defining Moment

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong (1 Corinthians 16:13).

Now we set out upon the journey to unlocking purpose. The first key to unlocking your purpose is preparing for destiny-defining moments. Be watchful, steadfast, and alert! It's in these moments when power meets potential, the power of God connects with the potential within you, and you are supernaturally catapulted into the pre-destined, preordained purpose that God has assigned to your life.

Throughout this book, we will be looking at the account of Elijah and Elisha and how their relationship is an example of what happens when power meets potential. For Elisha, it began

with a *moment.* For you, it will be the same way. To step into our divine purpose, we need to recognize and steward our divine moments.

In this chapter, I want us to look at how Elisha responded to his moment of visitation. This gives us a powerful picture of how to respond when your moment walks up to you.

It begins in First Kings 19:19:

> *So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him.*

Based on the text in First Kings 19, I want to share some vital keys to recognizing and stewarding your destiny-defining moments.

Destiny-Defining Moments Happen Quickly

> *Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him* (1 Kings 19:19b).

First of all, notice how quickly Elisha's moment happened. While Elisha was plowing, Elijah the prophet passed by, and *threw his mantle on him.* There was no ceremony or service. They did not sit down over a business lunch and discuss the logistics of what the mantle transference process would look and function like. There was no red tape. There were no emails. There were no phone conferences, Skype conversations, or cross-country travel reservations. Elisha was plowing, and Elijah—representative of Elisha's divine moment—*passed by him* and tossed the mantle upon him.

I know this example will probably mess up some people's thoughts. That's good. I want to mess you up, because it's in the process of messing you up when the Holy Spirit renews your mind. He's cleaning up your thinking and enabling you to accommodate His supernatural ways and workings. You see, I want to mess up your expectations of how you've got it planned out. So many of us are in bondage to preconceived ideas of how we assume God should launch us into our purpose and destiny. If your mind can comfortably wrap itself around a scenario, most likely, the Holy Spirit is going to uncomfortably remove the wrapping and invite you into an elevated perspective.

The main problem with our planning is that it discounts the power of moments—*quick moments.* Planning usually involves the image of a process. We consider the ideal process of how some certain result should come to pass. I say it again, God wants to radically mess up your process. This doesn't mean you stop thinking, cease dreaming, and quit planning. There is a difference between having a plan and being in bondage to your plan. Have a plan. Have a dream. Have goals. Have expectations. Have processes. Have a picture. Have an image. Have these things, but don't become yoked to them. Don't dare exalt your plan over the power of a God-ordained, destiny-defining moment. One divine moment orchestrated by the Master can shift things that have taken you a lifetime to try and change.

One divine moment orchestrated by the Master can shift things that have taken you a lifetime to try and change.

Going back to First Kings 19:19, it appears that Elisha's moment could have taken place in the blink of an eye. One moment he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen; the next, he receives an invitation in the form of a mantle that would radically shift his destiny. The same is true for you. Your day of visitation is at hand. Your moment is waiting for you to be ready. Don't start getting paranoid, trying to figure out what your moment should look like. Elisha had no clue that his moment would look like some prophet throwing a mantle on him. In fact, it seems like Elisha recognized his moment, "after the fact." It was only after the mantle had fallen upon him and Elijah passed by that Elisha turned and ran after the prophet. Even if he was a minute behind his moment, he nevertheless recognized the power of his moment and responded appropriately.

Your key to being ready to run when your moment of visitation comes is simple. More than focusing on a moment, keep your eyes fixed on the Master. When the mantle hits, it is the still small voice of the Holy Spirit that will say, "This is your moment, son. This is your time, daughter. *Run after that prophet."* We need to always be in a state of readiness and expectation, as we never know when those moments will happen when God's power collides with our potential.

Destiny-Defining Moments Take Place in the Ordinary and Everyday

> *So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth* (1 Kings 19:19a).

Second, it is important to understand that destiny-defining moments take place in ordinary, everyday circumstances. In order to be trusted with a destiny-defining moment, we need to be good stewards of the unique moment we have been given *right now*.

Consider Elisha. He was simply being a good steward of where he was at his unique moment in history. He used his moments well, thus enabling him to be trusted with *the* moment. How we spend the sum of our everyday moments determines how we will respond to those life-altering, destiny-defining moments that come. I want to unpack this more, as I believe the secret to increase in the Kingdom has everything to do with stewarding what you have. How you handle the everyday shows God how you can be trusted with the extraordinary. Jesus notes this in His parable of the talents. The steward who was faithful receives this verbal recognition from his lord, *"Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things"* (Matt. 25:23). The "few things" for Elisha were his plowing. What are these "few things" for you?

How you handle the everyday shows God how you can be trusted with the extraordinary.

When Elijah approached Elisha, the setting was nothing above average. There weren't heavenly beams and angelic choirs singing. Scripture tells us that Elisha was participating in something very common at the time. He was diligently plowing with the

twelve yoke of oxen that were *before him*—the thing that was under his charge. He was faithful with what was before him, and this faithfulness positioned him to be in the right place at the right time when his moment came.

Too many of us want to chase after a destiny-defining moment; and as a result, we spend our entire lives running after something that should be running alongside us, ready to collide with our path. *Destiny-defining moments are like magnets to people who use their everyday moments well.* Do not despise where you are. Do not look negatively upon small beginnings. You are where you are for a reason, just like Elisha was exactly where he was for a reason—for that moment.

Also, too many desire a moment without recognizing that it is the sum of everyday moments that prepares a person to receive and run after their *moment.* Again, this should bring peace to our minds, which tend to fret over how and when our moment will come. This might sound backward, but the truth is those who become obsessed with seeking out *their moment* are actually ill-prepared for it and have the propensity to miss it when it presents itself. Why? God is looking for good stewards to trust with His greater works. He is looking for those who appropriately steward the lives they have been given before He promotes them into greater levels of glory, anointing, and power.

Many people seek after promotion from the usual, when in fact, God withholds the very thing they seek. He does not do this out of denial, but rather out of protection. Listen, God will protect you *from* your own promotion if that promotion has the potential to destroy you. If you're not ready for it. It's no mystery. Those who are faithful with the moments they have been given are positioning themselves for greater promotion; while

those striving after promotion, but are neglecting the moments right in front of them, are being spared from a tragic downfall.

Keep in mind, it's everyday moments that prepare everyday people for extraordinary exploits. Character is developed in the moments. Integrity is cultivated in the moments. The fruit of the Spirit mature in the moments. Christlikeness, godliness, and holiness are birthed in the moments. God is examining your moments, for they gauge your preparedness for *the moment*.

Destiny-Defining Moments Demand a Rapid Response

> *And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah…* (1 Kings 19:20).

The first thing we looked at was the swiftness of a moment's arrival. Scripture reminds us that *"Elijah passed by him* [Elisha] *and threw his mantle on him"* (1 Kings 19:19b). A quick moment demands an equally rapid response.

Before I continue, I want you to know that this is not some call to run after everything and make hasty decisions. There is balance. Elisha, no doubt, recognized that his moment was God-birthed and God-ordained. Before changing your life, switching jobs, moving across the country, marrying that guy, dating that girl, or doing something radical, the most important rapid, radical responses must always be to the One who authors your moment.

Let your heart be like Abraham's in Genesis 22, where he is brought into a destiny-defining moment. God instructs Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, giving him up as a burnt offering before the Lord. Pay careful attention to how the scenario plays out. Before Abraham took his son up the mountain, prepared

the altar, and yes, even raised the knife over the boy—only to be supernaturally stopped by the Angel of the Lord—Abraham offered a rapid response to God by saying "Yes" to His divine instruction. God set up the moment, and *"Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him*" (Gen. 22:3).

Our rapid response always belongs to God first.

Our rapid response always belongs to God first. He will reveal the specifics. He will provide direction. His Spirit will lead us and guide us. In order to position ourselves for divine guidance, we must offer a rapid, definitive "Yes" to what God is asking of us. Abraham did not wait around, giving himself time to talk himself out of the difficult thing God was asking him to do. God gave Abraham instruction, and we notice that *"Abraham rose early in the morning"* to begin this journey. He didn't wait around, pacing the floor, giving himself the opportunity to consider some other, user-friendly options. First thing in the morning, Abraham got up and began walking toward a moment that would not only define his life, but a prophetic moment that would set humanity up for *the moment* that would change everything. That moment would be the Cross of Calvary.

How did Elisha respond to his destiny-defining moment? *"And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah"* (1 Kings 19:20).

Moments happen *that* fast. In future chapters, I want us to look at *why* these moments are so powerful and how they unlock the potential inside of you. For now, we know that any God-orchestrated moment is worthy of our rapid response. Our "Yes" to God prepares us to say "Yes" to every decision we need to make in order to embrace the moment that is being presented to us. Likewise, our "Yes" to God emboldens us to say "No" to everything that would try to restrain us from promotion. Previously, we considered people who were ill-prepared for promotion. Just as bad as those who receive promotion who are not prepared for it, are those who *are ready* for promotion, but don't recognize its life-changing invitation that demands their obedient response. Run after it like Elisha did.

When your moment arrives, all bets are off. Running after a moment cannot produce that divine moment in your life. However, responding to a moment, *when the moment presents itself,* will bring your life into alignment with the power of that moment, and ultimately, God's glorious purpose for your life.

Reflections

1. What do you think a destiny-defining moment looks like? What did it look like for Elisha?
2. What are the three characteristics of destiny-defining moments—and how should you respond to them?
3. What is the difference between running after a moment and responding to a moment?

Chapter 3

EXPERIENCE THE GOD OF PURPOSE

There he went into a cave and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" **(1 Kings 19:9)**

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose **(Romans 8:28).**

For in him we live and move and have our being… **(Acts 17:28 NIV).**

Know the God of Purpose

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will (Ephesians 1:11 NIV).

It is by God's divine purpose that power and potential intersect and meet. It is a mystery that I think is worth discussing.

First things first. You need to know that the God you serve is a strategic God. He is the God of absolute purpose. He is the God who has a strategy, and according to Ephesians 1:11 (KJV), He *"worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."*

The God you serve is a strategic God—
the God of absolute purpose.

Nothing "just happened." Creation was not arbitrary. There are no cosmic blunders or mishaps. The God who created you is the same God who brought order to chaos, form to the formless, and purpose to nothingness. You may feel like that. You might feel like your life is formless, your future looks void of hope, and you have no purpose. Remind yourself, you were created by a God of Purpose. Nothing He made was created by accident—it was all sculpted with great skill and precision.

It was according to God's preordained purpose and divine design that He brought you into the world—and ultimately saved your soul. It was not your distress signal that brought God into your life. It was God who brought the distress signal that made you cry out after Him. Think about it. God is not just responding to your cry. He actually put the cry deep down inside you. He has put *eternity in your heart* (see Eccl. 3:11). He designed you in such a way that only He could satisfy the deep void inside your heart (see Ps. 42:7). In fact, the deep that *calls unto deep* was placed inside you by God Himself. He made it

possible for you to even have a deep that could cry out to the deep of Himself.

God is not responding to you seeking Him. He put the seek down in you. This didn't just happen. You didn't just happen. God has a unique purpose and an essential role for you to play, and He's working everything, good or bad, in your life after the counsel of His own will. This should bring us great relief and freedom. Before we spend additional time studying how *our* potential is released and how we fulfill *our* purpose, it is foundational that we become acquainted with the God of Purpose. If we are confident in His nature as the One who is strategic and purposeful in all that He does, it will become much easier for us to trust that everything is in His most capable hands.

Trust the God of Purpose

> *For the word of the Lord holds true, and we can trust everything he does* (Psalm 33:4 NLT).

In view of this reality about God's purposeful character, we really ought to just stop the murmuring and complaining and sit back and let Him drive. Trust Him! His Word holds true, and everything He says, and everything He does can be trusted. He knows what He's doing. He will bring into your life who He wants to bring into your life. Conversely, He will bring out of your life who He wants to bring out of your life. He has a purpose and a strategy that defies human comprehension; and though many people don't understand why you are in the position or the role or the place you are in life, haters cannot stop your destiny. Their words, their slander, their accusations, their antagonisms, their doubts, their mockeries, their jokes—nothing

any human being can say or do can restrain God's purpose from coming to pass in your life.

Nothing any human being can say or do can restrain God's purpose from coming to pass in your life.

Consider the timeless accounts in Scripture of men and women persevering through their odds and experiencing their destinies. Mockers could not keep Noah from building an ark and saving the world. Egyptian armies could not keep Israel from leaving bondage and crossing the Red Sea. Insults could not keep Hannah from believing for her son. An insult-hurling giant could not keep David from securing a supernatural victory over the Philistine army. Persecution could not keep the Gospel of Jesus Christ from spreading throughout the known world. The seed of each monumental victory was everyday people trusting the God of Purpose in spite of what everything and everyone else was saying or doing.

Your job? Continue to agree with the God of Purpose. Remember, the enemy wants you to bow down to his lies. These lies come in the different forms we just looked at. He uses words. He uses memories. He uses something a parent said, something a teacher said, something a peer or student or co-worker said to try and deceive you right out of your destiny. Trust the God of Purpose, for the same God who is full of purpose is also full of power. He is also entirely sovereign. This

means that He will make sure that your purpose is fulfilled, regardless what people say, regardless what problems come, and regardless how certain seasons of life treat you. Keep trusting the God of Purpose. The One who brings you *through* will also bring you *to.*

The Enemy of Your Purpose

> *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy…* (John 10:10 NIV).

Keep in mind, your purpose has an adversary (see 1 Pet. 5:8). This adversary, the devil, recruits a number of different methods of antagonism. These are the assignments aimed directly at your purpose. All of the mean things people have said, all of the mean things that they do, and all of the things that they set out against you are weapons of the adversary, targeted at your purpose. Stand on the truth that *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper"* (Isa. 54:17 KJV). No weapon that the enemy aims at your purpose can dismantle it or defuse it. Why? Because God is going to see your purpose through unto completion. The One who *"began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 1:6 NIV). God's purpose for your life *will* come to pass.

No weapon that the enemy aims at your purpose can dismantle it or defuse it.

Remember, satan is merely trying to steer you off course. He can't destroy your purpose. He also knows that you can't just lose your purpose, like someone loses a sock in the dryer or car keys in the sofa. He knows that his only formidable weapon against your purpose is securing your allegiance with his deception. When you start believing his lies over the truth of the God of Purpose, the devil beings to unleash his assault against your purpose. Again, it's not his tactics, tools, or terrorism that have any prevailing power against your purpose. What positions us for defeat is actually believing the enemy is more of a threat than he really is.

One of his main targets is your identity. He challenges your worthiness to fulfill God's purpose by using people to attack you. All of the lies, and the spirit behind the lies that are sent out against you, these are the enemy's attempts to distract you from purpose. The more you contemplate the negative things people are speaking against you, the less time you have to consider the greatness of the God of Purpose. He will surely bring His plans to fruition in your life and complete the good work He began. Your adversary knows that by getting people to spread lies and rumors and falsehoods about you, he is able to get you in that corner of distraction. It's like you are in the corner of a room, staring at a wall that is papered in lies. The lies try to consume your view, while God's truth is waiting just behind you, beckoning your re-focus.

If the enemy cannot distract you with lies, he will even try to use truth against you. He's desperate to distract you right out of stepping into your purpose by keeping your eyes off the God of Purpose. If you successfully stand your ground during his barrage of lies, the serpent will attempt another strategy. You see, the devil is an expert at digging up the dirt of your past and doing whatever he can to get you to stare at it—apart from

the blood of Jesus. The Bible identifies satan as the *"accuser of our brethren"* (Rev. 12:10). You are his target, not God. He cannot accuse you before God because of the *"better things"* that Jesus' blood speaks (Heb. 12:24), but he knows that he can try to deceive believers right out of their status in Christ.

My goal here is not to make us overly conscious of the devil. Yet to defeat him and overcome his schemes, we must be aware of his tactics. Paul makes this clear, indicating that if we are ignorant of the enemy's devices, we can easily fall prey to his schemes (see 2 Cor. 2:11).

One of the enemy's greatest lies concerning your purpose is that *you are unworthy to step into so great of a purpose*. We just discussed the fact that he delights in trying to veer you off course by reminding you of your past, your sins, your setbacks, your failures, your issues, your obstacles, your bondages, your addictions, etc. Here's the truth—the God of Purpose will walk with you through each of these. He brings hope, healing, forgiveness, cleansing, deliverance, freedom—every solution to every obstacle. Listen to me, it's not the obstacle or the failure that keeps us from pursuing purpose, it's what we believe about the *power* of the obstacles that keep us in limbo. This is where the enemy works overtime, trying to convince us that our stuff has the ability to keep us from stepping into divine purpose. This is a flat out lie. Sin, hell, and death itself could not prevent Almighty God from reaching down into your mess, invading your life, cleansing you with Jesus' blood, filling you with the Holy Spirit, and setting you on a course for victory.

Just think about it, if the very power of death could not keep you from stepping into God's divine plan and design for your life, what could possibly hold you back? God has dealt with every possible barrier. However, there is one you will deal with throughout

your life and you must learn to confront it appropriately should you desire to walk into your destiny. This is the boundary of belief. What do you believe about your purpose and your potential to fulfill it? Don't let the devil distract you with his lies and deception.

The God of Purpose Uses You in Spite of Yourself

> *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

We need to stop focusing on ourselves so much. God does not use us because of us; He uses us *in spite of us.* Paul the apostle recognized this on several dimensions. He had weaknesses that should have disqualified him from ministry. These were not restrictive, though. God used Paul in spite of his weakness, and He will use you in the same way. Remember, it is not because of you that God chose you; it is because of His divine purpose. Just think about it for a moment. Why in the world would God choose David to be a king? He had no background of a king, he was not trained as a king, he didn't live in the palace, was not reared up in an environment of kingly order. He was a shepherd boy. He was a goat chaser; and yet God said, *"I have found…a man after My own heart"* (see Acts 13:22).

Did that mean that David was perfect, or even close to being perfect? Absolutely not. And it doesn't just mean that David was a God-seeker, though he definitely fit that mold. Truly, God looked upon young David and declared, *I have found the man that is after My heart, that is after My purpose, that fits the spot of My purpose and destiny. I have found him. He's out there in the*

wilderness. He fits right into the strategic purpose of what I have orchestrated and I will use him in spite of himself.

It is not because of you that God chose you; it is because of His divine purpose

Now you can sit there, read these words, and act like you don't understand that, but if you have walked with God at all, you have come to discover that God uses you in spite of you—not because of you! In fact, the conditions that seem to make you the least likely candidate for a God-sized destiny are the very factors that maintain your humility.

The devil is trying to use our own weapons against us. We need to know that our past is not a weapon against us, but an anchor—a pillar. Our past, our surroundings, and our upbringing reminds us where we came from, that God stepped in and chose us in spite of ourselves.

Once when I was being interviewed, the reporter noted that I exhibited a humility that did not match my circumstances, and then proceeded to ask me, "How do you stay humble, Bishop Jakes?" Here's my answer. I said, "Because I know me. I have no choice but to be humble. It is by God's grace that I stand where I stand. He uses me in spite of me. There are things that pulled me out of my comfort zone, that pulled me out of my insecurities and out of my inhibitions. *He* pulled me. I had no choice but to come. I didn't come because I was wonderful or better or perfect or superior or anything else. I came because He drew me

by His right hand. He stretched forth His hand and said, *'I call you unto Myself, and I'm going to use you right there.'"* And the same is true for you!

Your Piece in the Puzzle

> *Though the Lord is great, he cares for the humble…*
> (Psalm 138:6 NLT).

You will never find your place until you find your purpose and you understand how we all fit together in the grand scheme of things. Remember, God is the One who assigns your greater significance. You may not see it. You may not comprehend it. It might not compute with your natural mind, but you have to trust the God of Purpose. He has a master plan to assemble the pieces together in such a way that from His divine vantage point everything fits together, everything makes sense, and there is a perfect image of all the parts working together as a whole. I repeat, in order to embrace the greater significance, you must trust the God of Purpose and not attempt try to do His work for Him. He is the only One capable of putting this great jigsaw puzzle of purpose together. In order to fit in, you need to humble yourself before His purpose.

Think of it this way. Everything fits together like a jigsaw puzzle. Have you ever tried to sit down and put one of those things together? I'm not good at those puzzles because I don't have the patience. It takes order. It takes time. It takes meticulous observation and precision on behalf of the assembler to fit one like-piece with its corresponding part.

With me, I want the stuff to fall into place *when I say so*. And so when I start working with those puzzles, I get angry. I get mad because there are too many of those little bitty pieces.

You know how it goes when you are trying to put one of those things together. One of the pieces either fell down behind the couch and you can't find it, or someone walked off with one in a pocket, and the entire project goes on hold because of the gaping hole in the puzzle.

I get no joy out of putting puzzles together. The process gets on my nerves. My patience is not suitable for the puzzle process. Because of this, I try to improvise. This is where so many of us stray from safety when it comes to walking down the path of purpose. We step into uncertain territory because of our unwillingness to wait on the Master Builder's divine timing and precision, and we start trying to make things fit together.

You know you've tried it. When one of those puzzles gets on my nerves and I can't find the missing piece—or the right piece—I'll take a piece that's *close* to fitting and I'll try to jam it down into the spot because it's so close to fitting. But it doesn't work out. Even though it looks very similar to the right piece, it is still the wrong piece. In trying to make a wrong piece fit, you have to tear out something to make it become something that it is not in order to fit into the place that it really doesn't fit. Did you catch that? You need to celebrate who the Master Craftsman has created you to be, and not try to distort or disfigure yourself in trying to bring your purpose to pass the way *you* assume it should take place. Yes, there are growth areas. Of course we learn, grow, change, and develop. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about who you are as the integral piece to God's glorious puzzle. I'm talking about how you have been uniquely designed, intricately wired, and purposefully positioned. Don't try to become someone else in order to fulfill your purpose. Why? As long as you strive to be someone you're not, you will never fulfill *your* purpose.

As long as you strive to be someone you're not, you will never fulfill your purpose.

Remember, when you attempt to malign God's design by fitting yourself into a scheme or scenario where you don't fit, you have to tear something in who you are. What happens when you tear, or change yourself, to try and become someone else in hopes of trying to fit somewhere that you don't actually belong? Your little plan actually messes up the bigger picture of what you're trying to do, which is ultimately fulfill purpose. I repeat, the longer you tear yourself by trying to become someone else, the longer you will prolong your journey toward purpose. God curved you where you needed to be curved, made you straight where you needed to be straight, made you blue where you needed to be blue, yellow where you needed to be yellow, and as soon as you find and celebrate that place where you fit…*purpose happens.*

Reflections

1. How does the enemy try to distract you from fulfilling your purpose?
2. What does it mean that God uses you in spite of yourself?
3. What can happen if you try to bring your purpose to pass yourself instead of waiting on God's divine timing?

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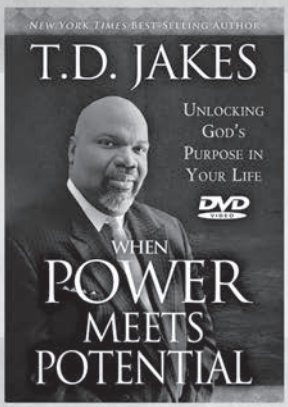

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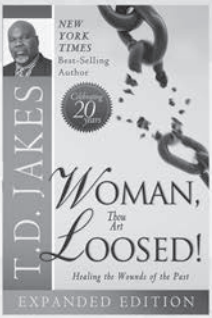

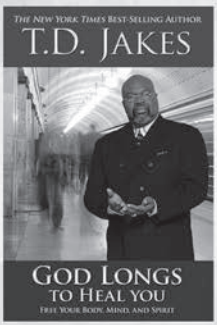

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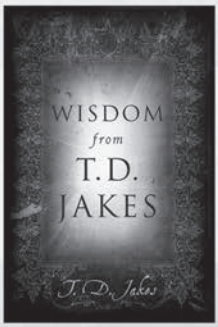

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