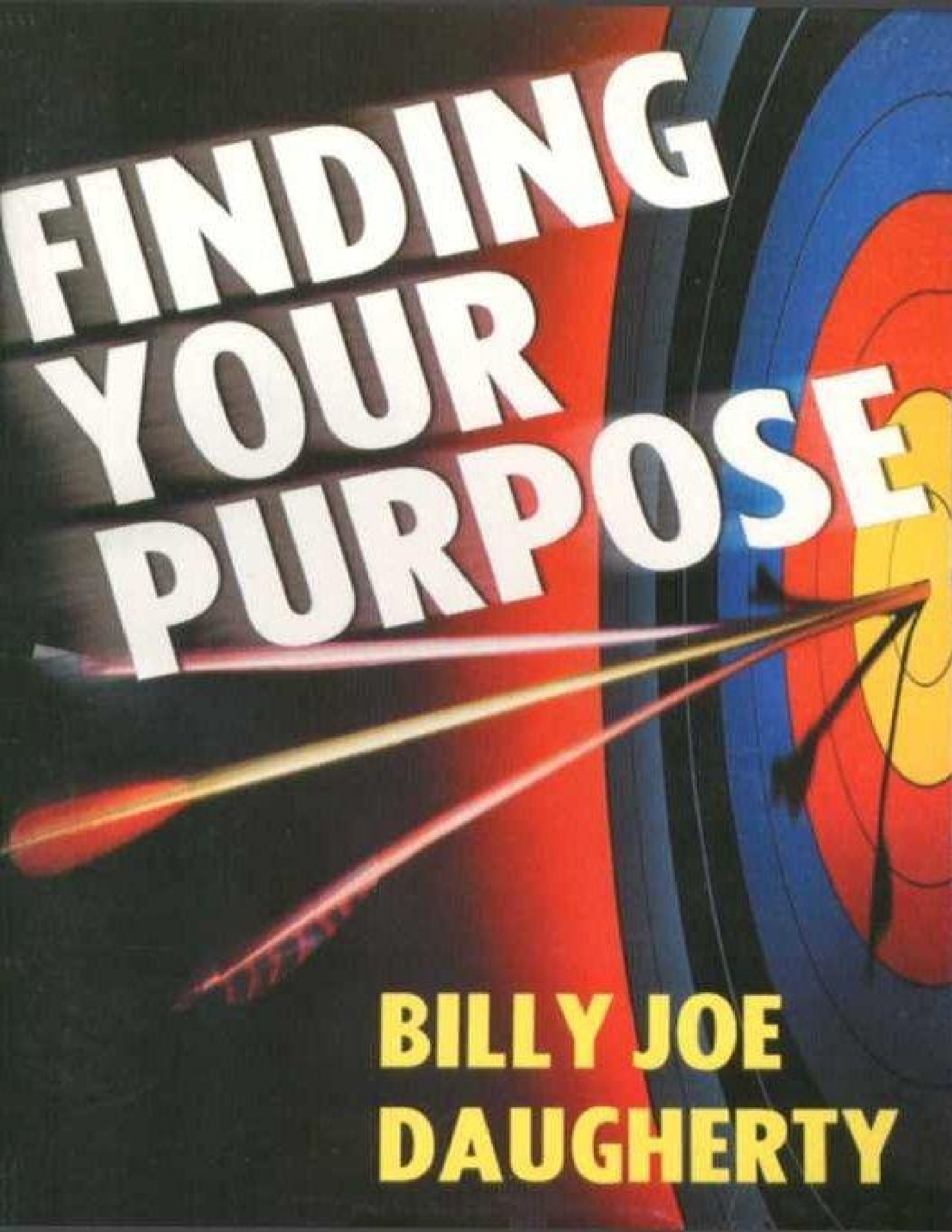
FINDING YOUR PURPOSE



BILLY JOE DAUGHERTY

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1
Created for Good Works

The three main questions that most people ask about their life are:

- Where did I come from?
- Why am I here?
- Where am I going?

As believers in Jesus Christ, the answers to all three questions are found in God. We came from Him, we are here in the earth for Him, and we are going back to Him. Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

Ephesians 2:10 says, *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."*

1. We belong to Jesus Christ.

We are God's property because Jesus gave His blood for us. We weren't bought with silver and gold, but we were bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. When He died on the cross, Jesus purchased sinners for Himself so that whoever comes to God through faith in Jesus Christ becomes God's property. He is our owner, and when you own something, you tell it what to do.

For instance, if you own your car and you start driving it, the car doesn't say, "I think I'll turn left" when you are trying to turn right. You have power over it because it's your car. You can use it, loan it, and do with it as you desire because it's yours.

It is the same thing spiritually when we have an understanding that God owns us, He directs us, and our purpose is linked with Him.

2. We are His workmanship.

You and I were Master crafted! It is no accident that Jesus was a carpenter. Do you feel sandpaper on your life, with some of the chips being cut away? You were custom designed. When people have custom-made clothes or a custom-made home or even a customized hot rod, it is designed with that person in mind —to fit their taste, their desires, the plan they have for that particular thing.

You and I have been custom designed with attitudes, personalities, and physical traits that are all related to the fact that we belong to God. He has a plan to use each of us in a way that He purposed long before the earth was ever created.

At one time Tim Harris was the First Assistant District Attorney. The District Attorney died suddenly and Tim was notified. Immediately he realized that he would assume that position because it was the state law that authorizes the First Assistant to assume the position if something happened to the D.A. But the governor's cabinet met and to Tim's surprise, they appointed someone else to fill the D.A. position. Political considerations became a reality to Tim, yet he decided to stay on and support the office.

The newly selected D.A. worked for a while. Then one day he went to the *Tulsa World* and announced that he was resigning. Tim thought, *Now the time was right andcfer the original humbling experience, he would be selected for the position* But again, politics reared up and someone else was appointed.

There was only a short time remaining in that particular term, and at the end of the term there would be an election. At that time Tim felt compelled to resign and run for the office of District Attorney after God spoke to Tim's heart and said, "Run for District Attorney." He met with a group of friends and told them what God had said. They said, "There is no way you can do that. You don't have the name recognition, and you don't have the money. It will take over $100,000 for the campaign, and you've never done anything like that." They tried to talk him out of it, attempting to convince him that the price would be too great for him and his family.

Tim prayed for a week and he felt God was urging him again, "This is what I have called you to do." Tim was unsettled about his decision and the consequences to his family and his legal career, but Tim announced to his friends the next week, "I am going to run." They said, 'You are crazy, but we'll support you." That group of friends helped him raise the money and campaign countywide, and to everyone's surprise, Tim Harris, a born-again, Spirit-filled man, became the District Attorney of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Tim attended the University of Wisconsin, but God spoke to him in his early years of training to be a lawyer. He later attended Oral Roberts University. Tim graduated from the O. W. Coburn School of Law. He knew both ends of the spectrum, from the liberal end to the conservative end. He realized that God had a destiny for his life. He said, "I know that my purpose at this time is to be in prosecution." In God's time and way he stepped into his destiny.

If you have struggled with your purpose, I want to encourage you. Not everybody is going to stand up and wave the flag, saying, "We are voting for you!"

People do not decide your calling. It is God who decides your purpose, and

He can lift you up and set you in that place where no one ever thought you would be.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

3. You were created in Christ Jesus for good works.

God has some good things for you to do. The great thing about being faithful is more responsibility. God has already preplanned and ordained in advance the good works that you are to walk in. Why? So that when you do it, you don't take the credit. You can't even glory in the good things that you do because you realize God already planned for them ahead of time, and He literally set you up. He gave you the ability, He gave you the place, and then He anointed you to do what you were called to do.

The people who don't understand that God ordained their purpose in life take all the credit for everything they do, whether it's in the Spirit, in education, in finance, or in the corporate world. They point to their own ability and greatness, and they are singing how great they are instead of how great God is! Give God the glory, realizing He prepared the good works for you to do.

4. You must choose to walk in that purpose.

Scripture says that you should walk in the good works God has prepared beforehand. This doesn't mean you will automatically walk in these good works. It is a choice you make to walk in them or to reject them and go another direction.

Saul was chosen by God to be king when the Israelites demanded that they have a king. In Saul's reign, there came a time when God spoke to him to do a particular thing and Saul chose not to do it. There was a good work for him to do that would have brought honor and glory to God, but instead he went another way. It was Samuel the prophet who confronted Saul:

So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, ”Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal.”

Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.”

But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?”

And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on."

So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel?

"Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, ’Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’

"Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the Lord?"

And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

"But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to

sacrifice to the

Lord your God in Gilgal."

So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,

He also has rejected you from being king."

1 Samuel 15:12-23

How important it is that you not reject God's assignment for your life! Once you know your holy purpose, the devil will send some bad things against you to stop you—criticism, negativisms, temptations, distractions, putdowns, and storms. Remember the storm that tried to stop Jesus from crossing the lake? Do you know why? There was a demon-possessed man waiting to be delivered on the other side of the lake.

It is time to go to the other side. We will make it no matter what the storm. Make a decision, *I will walk God's way regardless ofthe opposition of the badthings that happen, of things that are said or done against my life, or against Godsplan for me. I accept Godspurposefor my $2.*

2
I Sought God for My Purpose

When I was seeking God for His purpose for my life at age nineteen, I had an open vision while I was on a college football practice field. In the vision I saw people chasing one thing after another—houses, cars, education, and jobs. They repeated the same cycle with their children. Then, as they neared retirement age, their pursuit was for a house on the lake, a boat, and death.

The Lord spoke to me and said, "They will come to the end of their life and look back, and nothing they have done will go into eternity."

At that moment I began to weep. I was in full football gear in between plays. This vision happened as I stared out over the field with the offense in a huddle. It was the last thing I expected to happen.

Then the Lord said, "You can decide to live your life for Me, go where I tell you to go, do what I tell you to do, and touch people with My love. You will come to the end of your life and you will look back and you won't be looking at accumulations, accomplishments, or achievements. You will look back at the people you have touched, and they will all go into eternity."

I had been asking the Lord, "What is my purpose? What am I to do with my life?" That vision has never left me. I am living out that vision.

I don't know of any committed Christians who want to come to the end of their life and have God write up an evaluation on what they have done and call it a "zero." Every one of us wants to hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." A "servant" means you are submissive to someone else's choices. You have surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ.

3
Discovering Y our Purpose

In order for you to discover your purpose, you have to get to the point you are ready to do what God wants you to do. You must be hungry enough to ask God for revelation. James 1:5-8 says:

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.
For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;
He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

God wants you to know your purpose more than you want to know it. In John 10:27 Jesus said, *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."*

Proverbs 3:5,6 puts it this way:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

He will speak to you and give you the wisdom you need. For example, if you are skilled in working with horse shoes, God is going to give you a revelation of your purpose in working with people who have horses. You may be a computer analyst or a sales clerk. There is a purpose inside of you that may be a part of the position you are in, but God may have another position and place for you. Your purpose will stay with you no matter where you work. That purpose is a part of who you are, and *when you surrender yourself to the Lord, you put yourself in position to receive Hiswisdom*

If you have not surrendered to the Lord, why would He reveal to you what He has for you? Think about it! If you are an employer and you have an employee who hasn't been doing what you have asked him to do, and you are considering his release, why would you tell him anything else to do? So the first thing you must do is get in that place of surrender or submission or what some people call "yieldedness" or "brokenness."

4
A "Gethsemane" Experience

As a young Christian I remember hearing a minister ask, "Have you had a 'Gethsemane' experience?" I thought, *A what?* At that time, I didn't have a clue what he was talking about. But as I studied and later experienced a Gethsemane in my own life, I learned what he was asking.

Let me explain it. Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, knelt and prayed, *"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done"* (Luke 22:42). The "cup" represented Jesus' purpose—to suffer on the cross to destroy the works of the devil, to seek and to save that which was lost, and to reconcile man to God. Jesus died to Himself before He died on the cross.

Gethsemane is an experience where you die to self and to your own agenda so you can walk out God's purpose for your life. Until you do that, you will always be doing your own thing. God will offer you His blessing, His victory, a wonderful life, and a place of satisfaction and fulfillment, but until you surrender to Him, you will be going the other way.

5
Stepping Into Your Purpose

You can be in the right position but not really understand your purpose. This is the place where millions of Christians are. They love the Lord, they read their Bible, they pray, they go to church, and God has guided them to the right place. But it is yet to dawn on them the real purpose of why they are there.

I'll give you an example. Esther was a beautiful Jewish girl, carried away into captivity by the Babylonians. The Persians overran Babylon. The Persian king had a queen who wouldn't obey him, so he got rid of her. He said, "I want a new queen. Look for all the beautiful women in the country." So they had a beauty contest and Esther won hands down. She became Miss Persia and later the queen. Esther was a Jew, but she didn't reveal her nationality to anyone.

Mordecai, a relative who had raised her, sat outside the palace gate daily, and he wouldn't bow down to anyone except God. The king's right hand man, Haman, would come by every day and everyone would bow down to him except Mordecai and the other Jews. So wicked Haman said, "King, there are a bunch of troublemakers in your kingdom. They won't do anything we ask them to do. If you'll authorize it, I'll get rid of them for you." Without full knowledge of what the decree stated, the king stamped Haman's decree, which sealed the death of every Jew in all the province of Persia on a specified day.

When the contents of the decree became public knowledge, the Jews were on their faces mourning, wailing, crying, and fasting.

Mordecai sent a message to Esther: "A decree has gone out stating that all of the Jews are to be killed. Go to the king in behalf of your people."

There was a rule that if you weren't requested to come into the king's presence, the guards would kill you unless the king extended the golden scepter to you.

Esther sent word back to Mordecai, "The king hasn't asked for me so I can't go in." Esther was in the right position, but she had no clue what her purpose was.

Mordecai's message to Esther was to help her see that the Holy Spirit had been sending messages to her of her purpose. Yet she was only thinking, *Im prosperous. Things ere going well. I am so happy!* Hello to the Esthers of today! Wake up!

Mordecai made it plain:

For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Esther 4:14

When Esther read Mordecai's message this time, she prayed and said, *"I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"* (Esther 4:16).

I have a Mordecai message for you: *Either step into your purpose or God will use someone else. God has bought you to the Kingdom for such a time as this. Your purpose is about the deliverance of other people. Step up into it.*

6
Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Purpose

In the 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s in our country, a practice called "slavery" took place. People were put in chains and forced to work without being paid, and they were bought and sold. Our country suffered from it and we still suffer from the horrible things that took place and the hurts it caused.

A woman named Harriet Beecher Stowe began to help rescue slaves and get them safely into the North, out from the hands of their slave owners. She was disturbed by the fugitive slave act which allowed slaves to be retrieved when they had escaped into the northern states. She knew something had to change. God gave her an idea and that was to write a book and expose the wrongdoing of slavery.

She realized that many people who lived in part of the country where slavery wasn't practiced had no idea what was going on. She understood because she had worked with the people.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was a believer, and as she was taking communion, God gave her a vision of the closing part of the book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* It was a graphic portrayal of how the slave owner beat Uncle Tom to death. She wrote it in such a graphic format that 300,000 copies sold in the first year it was published. Sales kept increasing until all across the U.S. and particularly in the northern states, there was an understanding of the horrors of slavery.

When the South seceded from the Union and Abraham Lincoln had to make a decision whether there would be two nations or one, he made the decision that they would fight for the preservation of the Union. There was a group of people who understood it wasn't just about secession, but the love of money had caused the horrible practice of slavery and it had to come to an end. A war was fought over it. Abraham Lincoln, in meeting Harriet Beecher Stowe, said, "So you're the woman who started the war!"

You may feel like you're on the back shelf and no one knows about you, but God has a plan. He is going to use you and you could be the one to affect an entire nation. The freedom that came in the U.S. affected many other countries, but slavery still needs to come to an end in other areas of the world.

7
One Body, Many Members

In First Corinthians 12, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth and explained to them that the Body of Christ has many members, but it is still one Body. Although we have different roles, every person is significant. Your purpose and your value are not determined because you stand behind a pulpit or because you are on a mission field. It's when you realize, "God has an assignment for me right where I am."

First Corinthians 12:12 says, *"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."*

Paul compares the human body to the Body of Christ. We have many members, but it's still one body. Verses 13-27 go on to say:

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

For in fact the body is not one member but many.

If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.

And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.

And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty,

But our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,

That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

There are different parts of the Body of Christ. Just because you are not what you might call "out front" preaching doesn't mean that you are not a valuable part of the Body. It's important that you not feel insignificant because you are not like someone else. That's the whole point of this passage: *Every pert of the Body of Christ is needed.*

If your nose is stopped up, you're still going to live. But if your heart stops, it's over for you here in the earth. Sometimes people are out front, and then at other times people are unseen. Your work, though it may be unseen, is extremely valuable.

8

Memorial Service for an "Extraordinary" Common Man

The value of each person was driven home to me a few years ago when I did the memorial service for Don Rogers, one of our church members. Don and his wife were with us from the time we started pastoring, supporting us and cheering us on all through the years, through thick and thin, good times and tough times.

Don grew up in the same hometown my father grew up in—Stamps, Arkansas—and he knew my relatives. He graduated from Hope High School and we played against Hope in sports.

Don worked in the Owasso Wal-Mart store as a greeter, and at his memorial service, people shared about the positive impact Don made upon customers as well as employees. He would buy a bag of Tootsie Rolls and give them out to children who had obeyed their parents. If the children had not obeyed, they didn't get a Tootsie Roll.

Here was a retired man wearing his blue vest and name tag, turning what most people would call a routine job into an opportunity to train the next generation in the biblical principle of obeying their parents.

It doesn't matter who you are or where you work. If you've got a holy purpose from God, you can do something significant. You can turn your job into an assignment from heaven.

One of our pastoral staff members gave me directions on how to get to the funeral home in Owasso. I'm sure he gave me the right directions, but I just didn't pay attention because shortly before the funeral was to start, I was still looking for the funeral home. I pulled into a service station, and I asked two guys sitting on a bench where the funeral home was. They told me and I headed in that direction, but it was the wrong funeral home.

I saw a police station, so I thought, *These people will know where the funeral home is* I went in and asked a lady at the desk, "Can you tell me where this particular funeral home is?" She said, "Yes, you go down here, take a right at the traffic light, take a left, wind around, and it's up on top of the hill at the left."

I said, "Thank you," and as I turned to go an officer walked out of a room

and asked, "Are you Billy Joe Daugherty?" I said, "Yes, Sir." He said, "What do you want?" I said, "I just needed some direction." He said, "Get saved, read your Bible, and pray." He nailed me!

Then we both laughed!

I used that incident in Don's Memorial Service. I said, "Some of you headed out in the right direction in your life, but you have lost your way. You need someone to give you direction, and I am here to give it to you." I also thought about Don. He turned what some people would call "making a living" into *an opportunity to be a witness for Christ.* Wherever you work, you can give people divine direction.

As the funeral home director and I talked, both of us realized we had never been at a funeral service where there was so much talking before a service. I believe it was because Don had lived a great life. We weren't there to mourn his homegoing. We were there to celebrate a life that had been lived for God. What a difference!

When you live the life, you can tell people the right direction and minister the love and zoe life of God to them.

9
Be a Light Where You Are!

I am convinced that many people are at the right place. They just need to wake up, look around, and realize, "I can be a light here." You may work around a lot of unsaved people and you've been complaining. Quit complaining! You don't want to go fishing where there are no fish. You are in the greatest position possible because people all around you need Jesus.

I needed an attitude change when I worked in a boys' club years ago, making $1.00 an hour as the summer program director for the sports programs, camps, and Little Leagues. I was wondering, *Why am I here? What is the purpose for this?* I felt it particularly one night of the championship game of the girls' softball league. The umpire did not show up, so I had to step in and umpire in his place.

Have you ever been tormented? Oppressed? Beaten down? Rejected? If you haven't, could I suggest, umpire a girls' softball game, because it's not the girls you have the problem with. It's their parents!

Get the picture! Championship game. Two top teams. It's the bottom of the last inning, two outs, bases are loaded, and it's a full count—three balls and two strikes. The score is tied. If the team at bat scores one run they win. If they don't score, they go into an extra inning. So the girl at bat hit a ground ball to the first baseman. The first baseman picked it up and all she had to do was step on the bag and the inning was over. Instead, she threw the ball to home plate.

The girl on third ran towards home plate. The catcher was in position to receive the throw from first to tag her out. She caught the ball and at that very moment the girl was at the plate. She tagged her, and I couldn't think! I just stared. The dugout emptied. A mother shouted, "Safe!" Another mother shouted, "Out!" I'm going, "I don't know."

Then that bunch at the zoo right behind me started coming over the top of the fence! Finally my mind cleared, "The runner is safe. The ball game is over. They scored and won." The game was over, but it wasn't over for me.

Have you ever wondered, *Hew did I get into this place?* The Lord dealt with me, "Ask the boss if you can have prayer with the employees at the boys' club in the mornings." So I went to him and asked, "Could we have prayer right after staff meeting?" He just stared at me. Then he said, "Yeah, I guess that will

be all right."

So the next day he gave everybody their orders for the day. There were eight or ten people working grounds and different parts of the boys' club. He got to the part where we were going to pray and he nodded his head at me. That was my signal. No warning. No preparation. No introduction. I said, "We're going to pray." Try that in your place where everyone is unsaved!

As far as I know, no one responded during the entire summer. I wondered, *Why am I here?* There was one little guy on staff that I had warm feelings in my heart about for a number of reasons. He was attending the local Upward Bound Program. No one knew I was dating Sharon, my girlfriend and future wife, and she was working with the Upward Bound Program at the college. One day this guy, Sammy Joe, walked in, opened his wallet, and said, "I want to show you a picture of my girlfriend." It was Sharon's picture! I said, "Where did you get that picture?" I talked to Sharon about it and she said, "I just gave him a picture." That's why I said I had warm feelings in my heart about Sammy Joe!

Ten years later, I was in Magnolia, Arkansas, and I walked into a Wal-Mart. There was Sammy Joe checking. I said, "Sammy Joe, did you ever get saved?"

He said, "No." I said, "Well, today's your day!" I preached to him a little with people waiting in line, and he accepted Jesus Christ right there at that counter. I began to realize why I had been at the boys' club years earlier.

A few years ago, Sharon and I were standing in line in Chicago, waiting to board a plane for Tulsa. Behind me I heard a voice say, "It's a long ways from Magnolia, Arkansas." I turned around and there was the director of the boys' club. He had been saved, and since that time we have prayed together.

Whether you are driving a forklift, you've got a trowel in your hand, you're at the computer, you're in sales, or you're at home, God has a holy purpose for you. Get a sense of destiny: *I'm here right on time. God planned for me to be here. Whether I touch a thousand or one, whether I write a book and it changes a nation, or whether I hand out Tootsie Rolls at Wall-Mart, I can make a difference for eternity in others lives!*

It may be years or eternity before you know the full impact of why you are in a place. But if you are living out God's purpose, there will be no regrets.

Personal Prayer of Commitment

Father, I want my life to count for Your Kingdom by doing what You have called me to do. I want to know the fulfillment in this life that only You can provide.

I acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Your Son, and I believe He was crucified, buried, and resurrected, paying for my sins, sicknesses, and spiritual and natural poverty so I can enjoy the abundant life He provided for me in spirit, soul (mind, will, and emotions), and body.

I accept You now, Jesus, as my personal Lord and Savior. I submit fully to Your purpose for my life.

Thank You for empowering me with Your Spirit, Lord, so I can fulfill my purpose and be a bold witness of Your Kingdom in my area of influence.

Today is a day of new beginnings for me!

(Signature) _____

(Date) _____



BILLY JOE DAUGHERTY is founder and pastor of Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Victory has a Christian school, Bible Institute and Missions Training Center. Other Victory outreaches include taking the gospel via radio and television to North America, along with shortwave radio and television to other nations, plus the distribution of books, tapes, and videos. He and his wife, Sharon, minister God’s healing, saving, and delivering power as a team. They have four children and a son-in-law who work alongside them in the ministry.