

3 P's in a Pod:
Prayer, Purpose, Passion
by Beth Jones



This teaching was first given at Beth's live webinar, now available for sale at <http://www.bethjones.net/my-products/3-ps-in-a-pod-prayer-purpose-passion-webinar-module-1/>

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Beth Jones is a Christian speaker and writer who loves encouraging women to develop daily intimacy with Jesus Christ through prayer, Bible study, and worship, to discover and use their spiritual gifts, and to fulfill their great destiny for God's glory.

Beth's website www.bethjones.net ministers to women throughout the U.S. and in other nations like Russia, China, and African countries, featuring a bi-monthly ezine, articles, blogs, podcasts, and a variety of products.

Her articles have been published in *Ezine Articles*, Cindy Rushton's *Time For Tea* and *Homeschool The Easy Way* ezines, *Happiness* and *Triumph* magazines, *Teaching at Home* magazine, *The Valdosta Daily Times* newspaper and *The Madisonian* weekly newspaper.

Beth is the author of the ebook on prayer, *Walking With God*, and the homeschooling ebook, *The Call Of Wisdom: Teaching Our Children at Home*. Her homeschooling website is www.bethjones.net/thewordhomeschoolingwithbethjones.

Beth is a 2006 graduate of CLASServices professional speakers' and writers' training classes, and is a member of Toastmasters International. She won first place in her Toastmasters club's contest in the humorous speech category in 2009 and won first place for her club in the humorous speech category in the regional contest in 2009.

Beth is a passionate, sincere, transparent speaker with a dry wit, enjoyed by audiences big or small, and she will inspire you to go deeper in intimacy with God and to become all that God created you to be. You can contact Beth at elizabethdjones@gmail.com or request her for a speaking engagement at her website at <http://www.bethjones.net/about/contact/>.

While Beth loves, and mostly lives, life on her laptop, she also enjoys spending time with her family and once in awhile driving around alone in their black Saturn Ion car, drinking a cold fountain drink and turning up the music loud. For Beth, life is much better with chocolate, cute shoes, and traveling to new places. She has been married 18 years to Ray Jones, a critical care paramedic and founder of SEMSAR (www.semsar.org/rescue/), and they have 3 beautiful daughters, Heather, Eden, and Leah.

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3 P's in a Pod: Prayer, Purpose, Passion by Beth Jones



Do you have a consistent, daily quiet time with God? What is prayer? Do you think you have to spend a long time praying or need to pray a certain way for God to hear your prayers? Does God really answer prayer? Do your prayers matter and do they accomplish anything?

Do you know what is your purpose on this earth? Are you fulfilling that specific, God-ordained purpose? Or do you think there isn't even any point to life? Do you know what your spiritual gifts and talents are? Are they tied in with your life purpose?

Are you pursuing your passions? Do you enjoy your life, having an exciting adventure, or do you live a routine, boring, mediocre life? Are you living your passion out loud?

All these questions and more were addressed in my June 2010 webinar, *3 P's in a Pod: Prayer, Purpose, Passion*. Several ladies on my subscriber's list signed up and we were all encouraged, blessed, and had fun! You can purchase a copy of the live, unedited recording here. <http://www.bethjones.net/my-products/3-ps-in-a-pod-prayer-purpose-passion-webinar-module-1/>

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This ebook will share that same teaching, going more in depth in each area. It will encourage you that you can have that daily intimacy with God in prayer, discover and walk in your God-given purpose, and pursue your passion for a more fulfilling, fruitful life that will glorify God and will greatly bless Him, you and others.



God never intended for you to feel alone, confused, lost, unhappy, unfulfilled, or bored. He wants your life to be an exciting adventure in Him. Everywhere that Jesus the Son of God went while He lived on earth, exciting things happened! The blind and the lame were healed, the demonized were set free, and the poor were fed and given the good news! Jesus said that those who had faith in Him (us!) would do even greater things than Him! (John 14:12)

Even before God created you in your mother's womb, He had a great plan already in place for your life. "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5, New Living Translation)

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You have an incredible destiny in Christ - God has plans of wonderful success for you, and not of suffering. (Jeremiah 29:11, NLT)

All we as His children need to do is believe in Christ and pray, discover that God-sized purpose, tap into our passion, and walk in that victorious, abundant life in Him!

Are you ready? Come on then, take off your shoes, and stay awhile!



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Prayer



"About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. Then he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

"And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me. But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 18:1-10, NLT)

One of the reasons Jesus pointed to children as our example in life is because they are innocent, they are humble, and they simply believe God. The faith of a child is powerful! This kind of faith moves mountains - and most of all, it pleases God!

When we have our daughter Heather, her husband Kyle, their 6 year old daughter Annabelle and 3 year old daughter Violet over for dinner sometimes, Annabelle and

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Violet always want to say the prayer to bless the food. (Their parents have trained them well!) I love listening to their sweet little voices as they pray, although the family finds their prayers amusing:

"God, thank you we had a good day and thank you for daddy and mommy and nana and papa and Leah and thank you that it didn't rain today and we got to play outside and God thank you for the pretty butterfly we saw today in the yard....and oh yeah, God, thank you for the food we're about to eat." It is so precious!



Annabelle and Violet

We can learn so much listening to children's prayers. Their prayers are:

- Sincere
- Simple
- Unpretentious and direct
- Full of faith, without any doubt, worry, or unbelief

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It is adults who teach children to worry, to fear, and to have unbelief. As we grow older, we often lose that simple, child-like faith and begin to doubt God. We rationalize. We question. Our intellect, reasoning, and logic get in the way of our faith. We start to complicate things as we age, especially in our relationship with God. **Children simply take God at His word and believe He's just God!**

It is no problem for a child to believe that God made Adam out of the dust or that the large fish swallowed Jonah or that a donkey talked or that Jesus healed someone who couldn't walk. Children have wonderful, pure imaginations and **hearts of wide-open faith that are untainted by skepticism and pride!**

When they pray, they pray straight from their hearts. They ask for exactly what they want, and they expect God to hear them and for them to receive it. If this invisible God is as big as we believe He is (bigger than the sky, bigger than the earth and the universe), why wouldn't He be able to answer a child's impossible prayers? After all, He is God! Remember, Jesus always prayed **LIMITLESS** prayers!

Maybe it's time for us to become more like little children! Child-like, not child-ish!

What is prayer?

Maybe you grew up in a home where you were never taught how to pray or what prayer is. Even if you grew up regularly attending a church each week, you may still have beliefs about prayer that are incorrect. Religion and some traditional doctrine may have skewed your perception of prayer, God, church, and Christianity. You may have only experienced prayer as rote, repetitive ritual, which was empty, boring, and meaningless. Prayer is not a religious duty! **When you strip everything pretentious and religious away, prayer is a relationship - a deep, intimate, loving friendship with God.**

The Bible has many wonderful examples of prayer and people who prayed. **Jesus is always our greatest example.** He taught His disciples how to pray in Matthew 6:9, to pray God's will be done and His kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. This was not to be a rigid formula, but a guideline. This prayer also included the need to

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forgive our enemies, because God has forgiven us. (Matthew 6:14-15)

Jesus also showed us how to pray simple but limitless prayers of faith, such as when He thanked God out loud for the bread and fish to feed the 5,000. (Mark 6:30-44) Our prayers are unstoppable and bring about the impossible! **Jesus often went away alone to be with God His Father**, showing us the importance of spending time each day with God to be refilled, strengthened, and taught by Him.

Jesus only did and said what His Father said and did, and so should we. (John 5:19-20) Jesus never decided that He was just sick and tired of always trying to do the right thing when it was never appreciated anyway, and that He should just quit and go do whatever He wanted. **Jesus knew that He must be obedient to God until His death. It didn't matter what other people said or did.** He set His face like flint toward Jerusalem, and willingly lay down His life to obey God and so that we could live.

From Jesus we learn the following about prayer:

- Find a solitary place to be alone with God. (Matthew 6:6)
- Jesus said don't be like the hypocrites who loved to pray in public and be seen by others. You don't have to pray long prayers or pray a certain type of prayer (such as the ACTS formula) for God to hear you. (Matthew 6:5)
- You don't have to get into a certain physical position to pray. Jesus prayed celebrating at a wedding, kneeling, standing, sitting at a well, walking along a road, dying on a cross, and now sitting in His throne in heaven! It is the posture of our heart that matters to God.
- You don't have to beg God for Him to hear and answer you. Just ask Him simply and directly like a child would. (Matthew 7:7)
- Pray impossible, limitless prayers because we serve a God who does the impossible and the limitless! (Luke 1:37)
- Forgive so God will forgive you and will hear your prayers. (Matthew 6:14)
- Pray according to God's will (God's will never violates His own Word!).

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- Pray believing that you will get what you ask for. Even if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to the mountain move and it will move! (Matthew 21:22, Matthew 17:20)

Another great example of someone who prayed and one of my favorite stories in the Bible is Enoch. Enoch is not mentioned a lot in the Bible, but when he is, it's powerful. Right smack dab in the middle of some ho-hum genealogy in *Genesis 5:24 NLT* (are these "begets" one of your *least* favorite parts in the Bible, too?), God throws in something totally unexpected and incredible that makes us go, "WHAT?"

"Enoch lived 365 years, walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him."

What do you MEAN, he disappeared? Apparently God liked Enoch so much, He decided He wasn't going to take any chances and leave him on earth any longer to be corrupted or to die. He just snatched up Enoch, and took him to heaven with Him!

WHOA! How would you like to be moseying along one day, fixing your husband and your kids a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, when all of a sudden you're on the gold streets of glory?!



In the original language, that phrase "God took him" means to snatch, to take away, to marry, to capture, or to lead in the hand. (Blue Letter Bible, Strong's) What a beautiful picture - God just holding Enoch's hand and walking with him into heaven!

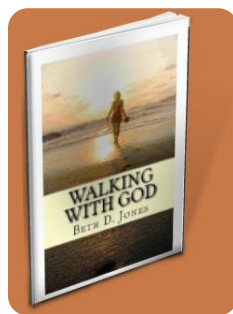
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Enoch had such an intimate relationship with God, praying, walking and talking with Him, getting to know Him each day, and God decided to just take Him. "Beam me up, Scotty!" (Captain Kirk in *Star Trek*, one of my husband's favorite shows)



Can you imagine the buzz this event caused with Enoch's family and friends? Think of people who are suddenly missing today, and how it creates such a stir. It would have been no different in response then, only in this case Enoch disappeared because it was God who took Him away! They were great friends. ☺

Enoch's relationship with God intrigues me. I love that phrase, "Enoch walked with God," and it was the inspiration for the title of my ebook, **Walking With God**, which is available for sale at my website here. <http://www.bethjones.net/my-products/walking-with-god-ebook-now-available/>



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What about you? Do you have a consistent, daily quiet time with God? Just walking and talking with Him? You and I probably won't be taken up into heaven like Enoch was! But you won't ever be alone again because God is *Emmanuel*, God-with-us.

We never need to be afraid or feel ashamed to come to God. We don't need to feel like we have to first get "all cleaned up" before God will let us in the front (or back) door! Jesus is the door. He is the one who cleanses us of our sins through the power of His blood. He died so that we could live forever with God in heaven. He was the substitute for us on the cross to redeem us.

God already knows about our sins, and He already provided the way for us to be forgiven - through Jesus' work on the cross. We don't have to perform or do good works to get God to accept us. He already accepted us over 2,000 years ago at Calvary when Jesus died for us and said, "It is finished!"



Have you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If you haven't yet, today is your invitation to have a relationship with God for all of eternity. Come meet my best friend, Jesus.

Just give Him your life, and it will never be the same again! God doesn't promise us a problem-free life when we accept Christ. But He does promise He will never leave us or forsake us. He will be there with us every step of the way, until our time here on earth is over. Accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior is the start of a very exciting adventure! I am so thankful for all God's done for me, how He's wiped away my past and set me free. God has dramatically changed my life, and He will yours, too!

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Prayer is simply a relationship with God.

Walking and talking with Him like Enoch did, like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. We have a direct line to God all day long, 24/7, 365 days a year - just like being able to text our spouse, child, or friend on our cell phone every day, or to email a business partner. You can be reassured that God:

- Is never too busy for you.
- Never goes on vacation.
- Doesn't have to squeeze you into a time slot on His Dayplanner.
- Won't put you on hold (call waiting).

Many people don't pray because they think they have to pray for hours. This simply isn't true. In fact, Jesus warned people not to be like the hypocrites who prayed long prayers and wanted to be seen by men. (Matthew 6:5) Observe a child praying. Children's prayers are short, sweet, and simple - and full of faith! These prayers are what are acceptable to God. Children don't have our unbelief and doubt! Jesus told us to become like little children.

Some people don't pray because they are under condemnation. They think God is angry and wants to zap them whenever they mess up and do something wrong.

Their view of God is distorted. Maybe you had a father or a mother or another authority figure in your life who abused you, criticized you, was unforgiving, or was cold and distant. Your perception of God as a Heavenly Father may be skewed as a result. You think God is like your father or maybe your mother or another authority figure who mistreated you. But He isn't. God is love. (1 John 4:8)

God will forgive you. You don't have to feel afraid to come to God or ashamed of your sins. God knows about them and He loves you anyway. You don't have to perform for Him or do good works, paying penance. Jesus took care of all that at the cross over 2,000 years ago. God wants to spend time with you each day and let you know how much He loves and forgives you. Like the father of the prodigal son, God is just waiting to throw His arms around you and rejoice that you are home. (Luke 15:11-32)

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People may also be under the impression that to pray "right," they have to pray in the early morning - "you know, like Jesus did." The Bible does give examples of Jesus praying in the morning, but it doesn't limit Jesus' times of prayer to morning. Jesus was praying in the garden and arrested at night. (Matthew 26:30-75) When he talked to the woman at the well, it was in the daytime, probably noon.

God doesn't care what time we pray! He just wants our hearts. We can pray in the morning, afternoon, or night - as long as we pray!



So don't feel under condemnation because you don't wake up at the crack of dawn to pray "like other spiritual giants of faith." I don't usually, either! In fact, my more formal times of Bible study and prayer are often at night, before I go to bed. Shocked? Well, I am *not* an early morning person! And I know that God hears my voice when I pray! ☺

Your afternoon or night time prayer may touch God's heart more than someone's 50 straight days of prayers at 5 a.m., because yours is more sincere and not just religious, prideful duty!

My friend Jennifer Schwilling has a wonderful book called Night Owl Devotions about praying at night before her bedtime.

<http://www.jenniferschwilling.com/moms-no-chaos-zone-store> It's written for busy women who want to find time for consistent devotions, even if they can't get up in the early morning to do it.

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It's not like if you begin to pray to God around 4 p.m. when the kids are playing in their rooms or at 10 p.m. as you lay down for the night, God is going to say to you, "Sorry! You'll have to come back early tomorrow morning when I open again!"



You don't have to be formal when you talk to God, either. Just be yourself and talk to Him, like having a cup of coffee with a friend. God doesn't want you to pretend or to be fake. Just share your thoughts, feelings, praises, and struggles. Pour out your heart to Him like water. (Lamentation 2:19) God is interested in every single detail of your life, big or small.

The sum of it is this: God loves you. He just wants to be with you, to spend time with you. He wants to reveal to you His secrets. (Amos 3:7) God loves to see your face and hear your voice; He says your face is lovely, and your voice sweet. (Song of Solomon 2:14)

Today pull away alone to be with God and pray. Spend some time in His word and worshipping Him. In His presence you will be encouraged, strengthened, and refreshed. In prayer you will receive His wisdom and guidance for your life. And most of all, as you pray God will reveal to you the depths of His love for you.

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Purpose



"These are the words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests from the town of Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. The LORD first gave messages to Jeremiah during the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah. The LORD's messages continued throughout the reign of King Jehoiakim, Josiah's son, until the eleventh year of the reign of King Zedekiah, another of Josiah's sons. In August of that eleventh year the people of Jerusalem were taken away as captives.

The LORD gave me this message: "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations."

"O Sovereign LORD," I said, "I can't speak for you! I'm too young!" The LORD replied, "Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the LORD, have spoken!" Then the LORD reached out and touched my mouth and said, "Look, I have put my words in your mouth! Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. Some you must uproot and tear down, destroy and overthrow. Others you must build up and plant." (Jeremiah 1: 1-10, NLT)

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Even before we were in our mothers' wombs, God knew us and had a great plan for our lives. This scripture in Jeremiah gives me such hope. You and I were created for a specific, unique purpose. We are not some random accident from a Big Bang! God had us in mind even before we were that twinkle in our daddy's eye when he was looking at our mama! ☺



What's the point?

Sometimes we may wonder what the point of our lives is, what is the purpose. Like the characters on the six-season episode, ABC show *Lost*, we have lots of questions about where we are and what we're doing here.

We may wonder if we're on a tropical island paradise or in hell itself. Sometimes our lives feel like a hell. The pain can be unbearable emotionally, physically, and/or spiritually. We don't understand why bad things are sometimes happening to us or loved ones.

Relationship strife, financial difficulties, health issues, business or ministry problems, and other life stressors can discourage, worry, anger, frustrate, or confuse us.

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Or maybe we've achieved a great level of success, prosperity, and/or fame, and seem to "have it made," but we still feel empty inside. There is this big, black hole inside of us and nothing seems to fill it.

"These are the words of the Teacher, King David's son, who ruled in Jerusalem. Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!" (Ecclesiastes 1:1, NLT)

Does your life seem meaningless? Do you feel adrift at sea? Do you know what your purpose is? Do we just eat, drink, and be merry in this life - and then we die?

Dear friend, you were made for a Divine reason! God had a specific blueprint in mind when He created you in your mother's womb. He knew and planned the color of your eyes and hair, the shape of your nose and chin, if your eyelashes were thick or thin, your I.Q., your spiritual gifts, your type of personality, whether you would like pickles or watermelon, if you would be married and have children or be single, divorced, or widowed, what your ministry would be. God knew everything about you before you were even born, even all the days of your life before they even started! (Psalm 139:16)



God knew and loved you before you were born. He has a great plan for your life, plans for success and not of suffering. (Jeremiah 29:11, Contemporary English Version) In fact, you can't even imagine the incredible things God has in store for you if you love God! (1 Corinthians 2: 9)

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We need to find out what our specific, God-ordained purpose is. We don't want to get to the end of our lives and find out that we never fulfilled our destiny, that we wasted our whole life.

There is a story of a little boy who died and went to heaven. Jesus was showing him around, and introducing him to the great preachers of faith such as John the Baptist, the apostle Paul, Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, and other great men and women.



The little boy then saw someone he recognized from t.v. and said, "There's Billy Graham! Jesus, I bet Billy Graham was the greatest preacher who ever lived in all of history, huh?" Jesus shook His head sadly, and then pointed to an old man in the corner. "No, my son," He said, "THAT was the greatest preacher who ever lived. He chose to be a mailman instead."

Please understand, I highly respect postal workers. In fact, I happen to just love them because they are the ones who get my thick letters in Kansas City, Missouri all the way to my dear sister Maria in Valdosta, Georgia!

There is nothing wrong with a mailman. They are so faithful to deliver our letters and packages all year long, rain, snow, or shine. The point of this story is that we

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don't want to fail to fulfill the mission and destiny that God has for our lives. We can choose to obey or disobey His calling on our lives.

"Have you ever wondered why God doesn't just immediately take us to heaven the moment we accept his grace? Why does he leave us in a fallen world? He leaves us here to fulfill his purposes. Once you are saved, God intends to use you for his goals. God has a *ministry* for you in his church and a *mission* for you in the world." ~
(*The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren, p.229)

Ways to discover your purpose

How do you find out what your purpose is? Ask yourself the following questions to help you discover your purpose:

- What are your spiritual gifts?
- What are your natural talents and skills? (Remember the man who hid his talents in Matthew 25:18.
- What do you love to do? What would you do even if you weren't paid?
- What hurts your heart? What do you want to change on this earth?

What is your passion? What do you love to do? Think back to when you were a child. What did you want to be when you grew up? When I was a child, all I wanted to be when I grew up was a writer and a mom. I've been writing since childhood, and I became a mother when I was only 18 years old. My husband Ray and I have three beautiful daughters, Heather, Eden, and Leah, so I did that. Am I fulfilling my writing/speaking purpose? Not to the degree that I dream of, but I am on my way!



What about you? Are you walking in your purpose today? Have you started yet?

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Your spiritual gifts, natural talents and skills, passions are the keys to your purpose. Keys unlock doors!

Write down your spiritual gifts, talents and skills, and passions. Write it down!

If you are not familiar with the spiritual gifts, here are some scriptures to help you:

- **Ephesians 4:11**-The five-fold ministry gifts (These are governmental offices in the church - apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers.)
- **1 Corinthians 12:8-10** - 9 gifts of the Spirit - (These are the gifts God wants to function in your life - the word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment, gift of tongues, interpretation of tongues.)
- **1 Corinthians 13:27-30** - These are the gifts to be used in the church/ministry (apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues).

Read the four gospel accounts and study the life of Jesus to discover how the spiritual gifts worked. He operated in every single one of the gifts perfectly. Two excellent resources on the gifts are the *Gifts and Ministries of the Holy Spirit* by Lester Sumrall and *The 3 Colors of Ministry* by Christian A. Schwarz.

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The gifts did not cease with Jesus' death, burial, and ascension or the death of the apostles. They are still active today. The Holy Spirit is still very much alive and kicking! ☺

Whatever our beliefs are about the spiritual gifts or doctrine, they should never become an issue of divisiveness, judgment, and arguing among God's people. Titus 3: 9 says, "But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless." We are one body in Christ!

The basis for all the gifts should be love. 1 Corinthians 13: 1 says, "If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." We don't want to be just a noisy gong!

God's agape love is the foundation of all the spiritual gifts. It does absolutely no good to have an extraordinary spiritual gift such as teaching or prophecy, and be a person who is rude and unkind to others!

Some of our most powerful weapons as believers in Christ are the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. They are the very essence of Jesus Christ, and satan can't defeat that! The gifts are nothing without the fruit of the Holy Spirit!

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Find a good, Bible-teaching church whose leadership believes in and uses the spiritual gifts. If you don't know what your spiritual gifts are, and have never used them, find out.

Maybe you've been in churches or even seen things on t.v. that are out of balance with the gifts. Maybe they weren't God's true spiritual gifts at all, but were counterfeits!

The Bible warns us that satan masquerades himself as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14) He can try to imitate the gifts, but they never come from him. He will do everything he can to discredit the name of Jesus, even if it means having someone abuse or misuse the gifts in the name of Jesus. That is why it's so important for us to have true godly discernment. We will know them by their fruit. (Matthew 7:16)

There will always be some people who get out of balance and do things in excess. But we can't throw the baby out with the bathwater. The spiritual gifts are GIFTS from God. We are to love them and appreciate them, and use them as He would have us do - for HIS glory.

1 Thessalonians 5:20 says do not despise, or treat prophecy with contempt. We shouldn't despise the other gifts, either. They come from God! It would be like your husband taking a lot of time to shop for the perfect gift for you, and when you opened it, you threw it in the trash can and sneered at it!

In fact, to not use the spiritual gifts God has given us is sin because then we are not being a good steward of all that God has given us. (1 Peter 4:10) It is very difficult to fulfill our purpose from God when we are not using the gifts He has given us to help us accomplish that purpose!

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Discover your gifts and then begin to use them for God. They are never about us, but are for God's glory. They are to lift up and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, never ourselves.

Also, write down what your natural talents and skills are. What are you good at? Make a list today! Ask other people what they think you're good at, too. You might be surprised at what they tell you. Maybe you're good at:

- Working with children?
- Writing?
- Speaking?
- Crunching numbers?
- Drawing/painting?
- Sales/entrepreneurship?
- Training animals?
- Teaching?
- Medical or emergency skills?
- Scientific observation?
- Horticulture

If you could do anything in the world and there were no limits of time, money, or anything else, what would you be doing? One of the things highest on my list would be traveling all over the world - going to Africa for a missions and pleasure trip!

Recently I watched the old movie *The Bucket List* with Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, recommended by my coach Cindy Rushton. There is some bad language in it, but otherwise it was a thought-provoking, humorous movie. In the movie, two men have been diagnosed with a terminal illness, and they begin to write a list of all the things they want to do before they "kick the bucket." By the end of the movie, they had accomplished almost everything on that list in the short amount of time they had left.

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What about you? What is on your bucket list of things you want to do while you are alive? Let's not waste a moment more! Let's write down our bucket list today - and then do *everything* on that list, Lord willing! God doesn't want us to have boring, mediocre lives, but to really live! He created us to smile, to laugh, to enjoy life in Him!



Don't put your life on hold anymore. Don't wait 10 years from now when the kids move out of the house to start living! Don't edit your dreams! Go for them now! What are you waiting on? When are you going to start living your dreams and fulfilling your God-given purpose?

God wants to make your dreams come true. He is the dream giver and the dream fulfiller. He is the one who put those dreams into our hearts, that eternal purpose and mission beating within our hearts. He gave those dreams to us and He wants us to fulfill them for His glory!

You might ask how you know if what you're dreaming of, what you want to do, is really God's will or your own. We know that anything that violates the word of God is not of God.

But what if your desire has mixed motives - say you want to make lots of money with your online business? God already knows you have mixed motives! He can help you to refine and purify any mixture in your heart. Maybe you do want to

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make a lot of money so you can buy some more pretty clothes - but you also really want to make a lot of money to help the poor and needy here in America - or in Russia or Africa! God sees your true heart.

What if you want to travel - just for the sake of traveling, because it's fun? So what! Don't you think God wants you to have fun? Think of your own precious children. Don't you love when they're having a good time? When they are laughing and playing, doesn't it bring a smile to your face? And doesn't it just break your heart when they are sad, angry, worried?



Our daughter Leah laughing on her birthday

God loves us even more than we love our own children. He gives His children good gifts, not bad gifts - just as an earthly father wouldn't give his child a snake if he asked for a fish! (Matthew 7:10)

Write down your dreams, goals, and desires - today! Then ask God to help you to achieve them according to His perfect will. He would love to!

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Maybe you would like to:

- Parachute
- English horseback ride
- Do a missions trip to Africa, Haiti, India, China, America's inner cities
- Speak at women's conferences, retreats, workshops, online events
- Write articles, blogs, and books
- Be the best mommy possible
- Adopt children
- Be a cosmetologist
- Teach children
- Be an entrepreneur (God has destined some people to great wealth for His glory and His purposes. Money is NOT evil! Abraham was very wealthy.)

Whatever it is, remember what George Elliot (pen name of Mary Anne Evans) said:
"It is never too late to become what you might have been."



Grandma Moses

Anna Mary Robertson Moses began painting in her 70's after abandoning a career in embroidery because of arthritis. She was better known as "Grandma Moses."

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Grandma Moses achieved great success in her latter years, becoming known all over the world after art dealer Otto Kallir exhibited some of her work in New York.

She became very famous for her paintings of farm life and country sides. In November 2006 her work *Sugaring Off* became her highest selling work at U.S. \$1.2 million.

Are you getting this?! It's NEVER too late to do what God has called you to do and to be!

So set some time aside today. Ask yourself, "What do I love to do? What is my passion? What is my dream that is burning inside my heart?" Yes, even that impossible dream. God is the God of the impossible and the limitless!

Pray and seek God's face. Listen for His still small voice. What is God wanting you to do with your life? What is HIS purpose for you? Ask Him to speak to you.

Here are some practical tips to help you pray, discover your purpose, and pursue your passion:

- Set aside a quiet time each day to hear God's voice. Read, study, and meditate on God's word. The Bible is your compass in life, pointing you northward to God. "For the Lord gives wisdom; From his mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright." (Proverbs 2:6-7)
- Seek the advice of godly counselors, especially successful people in your area of passion. They can show you the way. (Proverbs 11:14)
- Ask your family and friends what they think you're good at. You might be surprised! But don't let them throw cold water on your dreams. Smile, thank them for their two cents, and go on with God!
- Write down your dreams, goals, desires. Then go for it!
- Get more training and education in the field of your interest. Develop a love for learning. We should never stop learning our whole lives.

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- Start taking an action step today. What can you do today, **RIGHT NOW**, to start fulfilling your purpose in life? Write an article. Start a class. Share with others that you speak. Hire a coach. Do something! God will open doors for you that you can't open yourself.
- Prune activities in your life that are not helping you to reach your dreams and to fulfill your purpose. Relentlessly cut out activities that are emotionally and spiritually draining you.

Find solutions to your stress. (No, you can't get rid of your husband or your children! 😊) Every time you start to do something, ask yourself, "Is this helping me to achieve my life purpose, to fulfill my dreams?" Or is it just stressing you out more?

It starts with you and me today. No more excuses, blaming, or distractions. Just do it! You can do it! Decide today to live out your life purpose and to fulfill your dreams. God will help you! Just start taking one step at a time.



What do you really want out of your life? In 10, 20, 50 years from now, what do you want your life to look like? What would you regret NOT doing?

We have all heard the expression, aim at nothing, hit nothing. Zig Ziglar says, "Unless you have definite, precise, clearly set goals, you are not going to realize the maximum potential that lies within you."

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God has so much more in store for you and me. The best is yet to come. We have only seen the tip of the iceberg of what God wants to do with our lives!



Believe! With God nothing is impossible! (Luke 1:37) With God's help, you can pray, fulfill your purpose, and pursue your passion - all for His glory. And your life will bless Him, you, and others ABUNDANTLY!

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