

TONY EVANS

CALLED
for a
PURPOSE



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A Savory Life

We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

ROMANS 8:28

Have you ever felt a little hungry, opened up the refrigerator, and thought to yourself, “Hmm... what to eat? I know—a stick of butter! Yeah, that sounds great.”

Probably not. A large serving of butter doesn’t taste very good all by itself. Neither does flour. Or salt, or baking soda. Or most cooking ingredients, actually. Yet a master chef gathers them all together, blending them to accomplish her intended purpose. Then she puts them in the oven, and the scent of a freshly baked cake lures everyone nearby into the kitchen.

In the same way, God can use the ingredients of our lives to accomplish His purpose. We often hear Romans 8:28 quoted: “We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

However, people often refer only to one part of the verse: “All things work together for good.” The problem is that all things *do not* work together for good. To quote only half the verse is to miss the whole meaning. The promise is to people who love God and are called according to His purpose.

God has a purpose for you, and the first step in discovering your purpose is to surrender to that truth.

Only when you are living your life according to His purpose, not your own, will He cause all things to blend together for your good and His glory. Otherwise, the “all things” may still happen to you, but they won’t necessarily be carefully mixed together to accomplish God’s good purpose in your life.

Today, if your life is like a stick of butter or a cup of flour or a few tablespoons of salt, take the first step to turn it into something savory by surrendering to God’s will and seeking His purpose for you. When you are committed to Him above all else, He will mix all things in your life—the good, the bad, and the bitter—and turn them into something divine.

.....

Lord, open my eyes to see Your purpose in my life. Help me to surrender everything to You, and reveal to me the goodness that comes when You merge my life experiences together to bring me to my destiny.

Preparing for the Good Stuff

*The LORD will accomplish what concerns me;
Your lovingkindness, O LORD, is everlasting;
Do not forsake the works of Your hands.*

PSALM 138:8

Preparing for your calling is like going to a fine pizzeria, where skilled chefs start with a ball of dough. They roll the dough, pressing and mashing it. Then they start pounding on it. After banging it around for a while, they start throwing it up in the air and twirling it. That dough goes through a whole lot so that you and I can have the pleasure of eating it.

But when you go to a pizzeria, you don't ask for dough. You want the good stuff. You want the sauce, the cheese, and maybe some meat or veggies on top. Everyone wants the good stuff, but you can't get the good stuff until the dough has been prepared. In the same way, we have to be prepared for our calling. Sometimes our preparation starts with some pressing and some mashing. Sometimes we feel tossed around or banged up for a little while. But this is only in preparation for the good stuff.

Throughout life's bumps and bruises, God is preparing you for the perfect destiny He has created you to live out. Yet your response to those bumps and bruises may determine how quickly you reach your destiny. It's easy to throw in the towel and walk away when life's

challenges seem pointless or too painful. But if you will keep your eyes focused on God's purpose for you, not your pain, God will use your trials for your good and His glory. He works all things together for good when you love Him and live according to your calling. No pain or experience is wasted when you are a child of the King.

Keep your eyes focused on the destination—the end result—and you will find the strength for the journey that takes you there. You have a glorious destiny to discover and live out.

.....

Father in heaven, in those moments (or hours or even years) of preparation, remind me that You have a good plan and purpose for my life. Give me the grace to trust You in it all so I do not waste time relearning the same lessons I need to know in order to fulfill my destiny.

Little Steps, Big Blessings

I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

ROMANS 12:1

God will always test you for the big things by looking at the little things. I knew at 18 years old that God wanted me to preach. But I started out on street corners and bus stops, not in churches. I would stand in front of bus stops where people were waiting for buses, and I'd go at it. I would instantly have a captive audience of 10 to 20 people.

There was no pay involved. There was no fame involved. In fact, I looked rather strange sometimes pacing back and forth on street corners preaching in (what some people call) my *loud* voice. But I was doing what God wanted me to do.

The church came later.

One day, my street-corner sermon led to a moment of decision. A very angry-looking man stood across from me. As I continued to preach, he approached me, placed his hand inside his front coat pocket, and said, "If you keep preaching, I'm going to shoot you." He glared at me with a hatred I'd never seen before.

I knew that preaching was my calling, but I began to question whether a busy street corner in Atlanta in the late 1960s was the right location. At the same time, I prayed, "Lord, I believe You have called

me here to preach. I also believe that You heard my prayer for protection, and that You will keep me safe. Yet, Lord, if I perish, I will perish doing Your will.”

Just as I finished the prayer, I was filled with an overwhelming confidence, and I continued my preaching with even more passion and volume. The man who had threatened me became more irritated and glared at me, but he eventually walked away.

Many of us are waiting for big blessings, but are we willing to be obedient in the small things? God has since granted me a large church and a national platform, but those didn't come without years of obedience as I took the steps He asked me to take. If God can't get you to do little acts of good works, why should He entrust you with even greater opportunities?

Always be faithful in the small things. God is watching, and He will reward your obedience to Him.

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Dear God, I want to be faithful to You in the little things. I want to honor You in all that I do. Show me where and how You want me to take steps toward my destiny every day. Help me to remember that You are leading me on the perfect path to my purpose.

Custom-Made

*I will cry to God Most High,
To God who accomplishes all things for me.*

PSALM 57:2

My initials are sewn onto the cuff of several of my shirts. No one questions who owns those shirts because my initials—A.T.E.—demonstrate they are mine. I monogram the cuffs on the shirts that are tailored for me.

I also have other shirts that were bought off the rack. Many people could say they have shirts just like them, and those people would be right. But they wouldn't be able to say that about the shirts with my initials sewn in because those shirts were custom-made.

When a garment is custom-made, it's fitted to your unique shape. It is crafted with you in mind. That means it's not for anyone else to wear.

We are all unique. We are all custom-made. We have no reason to try to be someone else or to live someone else's life. Why settle for off-the-rack living when there is an identity and destiny custom-made for you? When you are living out your destiny, you aren't measuring who you are by comparing yourself to someone else. You aren't measured by what you have done according to what someone else has done. Rather, when you are living out your destiny, you measure what you have done according to what God created you to do.

Yet many people spend much of their lives trying to be somebody else. Why try to be somebody else? God already has one of them. There is only one you—and you are it. One of the first steps to living out your destiny is to realize it's *your* destiny. God made you unique on purpose because He has a plan that only your personality, background, temperament, mindset, and skills can fulfill. Embrace who you are—stop the comparisons. Halt the competitions. Let go of the jealousy, envy, or regret. Be the *you* God made you to be, and you will be on your way to manifesting the purpose God has created you to fulfill.

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Lord, help me to embrace my uniqueness. Reveal to me the special attributes that only I have, and show me how You can use them in a grand way as You lead me in my destiny. Help me not to complain about my differences, but to thank You for them.