

181 Practical Steps to Identify Your Unique Purpose

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I'm Julie Lefebure, your host. Life is remarkable, sometimes raw and always real. And some days we could use a little extra encouragement for our real lives. Here, you'll find that, along with personal life impacting stories, helpful life hacks, timely inspiration, biblical insight, and a fresh perspective.

The Encouragement for Real Life podcast equips you to be a light in this world and to shine bright wherever God has you. I'm glad you're here today.

Julie Lefebure: Have you ever wondered why God created you or what your purpose is? Well, if you have, then you join the vast majority of us who have done the very same thing. You know, I think the two most frequent questions that I receive from women these days are [00:01:00] number one, what is my purpose? Or number two, how do I know what God's calling on my life is?

A couple Saturdays ago at the women's event that I hosted locally, we just skimmed the surface of this, of thinking about our purpose and God's calling on our lives. And I believe numerous women walked away from that event with a clearer understanding of what their unique purpose is. And maybe you would love to know that too. Maybe you would love to have a clearer understanding of that as well.

So in this episode. I have just the thing for you. We are taking a deep dive into the practical steps to identify your unique purpose and calling. So I pray that it gives you clarity and confirmation. And so without further delay, let's get into this episode and find out some encouragement and hope for our real lives

[00:02:00] today.

Julie Lefebure: Ingrained in each one of us is the desire for purpose. I mean, think about it, we long for our lives to have meaning and intention and to matter. And maybe you've questioned, like I have, why on this earth am I here and why God made me in the first place. Or maybe you're wondering these things now, today.

Allow me to first say that you're not alone and you're not weird for wondering these things. I fully believe that God wired us this way. Maybe quite possibly to seek Him in our purpose. Jeremiah 29:11 in the New International Version says, "For I know the plans I [00:03:00] have for you declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future." The prophet Jeremiah penned this in his letter to God's people of Israel, who were exiled to Babylon thousands of years ago. But we can still find hope and encouragement in his words today. God has plans for you and me. Plans of prospering, of hope, and of the future. And I find joy and promise in this truth, don't you?

So what is a calling anyway? We hear of people talking about their God-given calling or God's calling on their lives. And if we don't know what that is, or if even do we have one, we might begin to believe all sorts of scenarios, including, well, maybe we're just not special enough to be granted a calling from God.

Believe me, [00:04:00] I know that. I've been there and I know that belief all too well. I am no expert in the subject of God's calling. Is there anyone but Him who is? But what I do know about it, I've learned through my own experiences from God. This isn't some magical thing where only a few are chosen, um, that they are the only ones that get a calling. No, every single one of us has one. Including me and including you. That's kind of exciting to think about, isn't it? That God, the God of the universe, the Creator who created you and me has a special calling and purpose on our lives.

There was a time when I felt unsure about my purpose. I didn't even think there was such a thing as a calling back then. I was living a full life going about my daily activities, but deep [00:05:00] down, I wondered if there was something more that God had for me. And actually, I share this part of my story in chapter two of my book, *Right Now Matters*. The chapter is titled, *There's Got to be More*.

I prayed then and asked God to show me what He wanted for my life. And He answered. And over time, I noticed a few things. I found joy in encouraging others. Whether it was through a conversation or a writing, or, uh, sharing a message at church. Friends would tell me how much my words helped them and encouraged them. And then I realized that God had given me a passion for encouragement and a gift for connecting with women in real and meaningful ways.

But it wasn't an instant clarity. I had to step out in [00:06:00] faith, starting small by leading a Bible study, writing a blog post, or speaking at a local event, even at my church. But each step confirmed that I was walking in my calling. And looking back now, I see how God used my experiences and skills and even struggles to prepare me for what I'm doing now, encouraging women through this podcast and beyond.

It's an ongoing journey though. I don't have all the answers and I never will. But I've learned that when we trust God and we take small steps of faith, He reveals more of His plan as we go.

So what is a calling anyway? Well, let's define it so we can better understand it. You know, if you've been around here a while, you know, I like to define words. But your calling is God's unique [00:07:00] purpose for your life, which reflects His perfect plans and glorifies Him. I'm going to say that again. Your calling is God's unique purpose for your life, which reflects His perfect plans, and glorifies Him. And some people think that it's tied to a career or a profession, but that's not necessarily true. It may, but it can also encompass more than just that. It can include relationships and spiritual gifts, and just everyday life. It's not a one time event or a one time thing, but it's more of like a journey over time. Living out our unique purpose and calling fulfills our deepest longings and it gives us great joy. We feel like we're doing what we were created to do. Plus it also impacts others and their lives as well. [00:08:00] Our callings are for our growth, for the good of others, and for God's glory.

Okay. So this sounds great, right? But how do we figure out what our calling is? Well, here are some practical steps to identify your unique purpose and calling.

After some time of praying and pondering and thinking and doing some research, I've come up with these steps. And so take some time to walk through these. Don't expect to have an answer right away. I mean, going through all these steps that you're going to know exactly what your calling is. But you will over time. It may take some time or you might get it right away. You might. But just be patient and just take one step at a time.

So step one is to seek God first. I encourage you to sit in a quiet place and ask God to reveal any of His plans to you, any of His plans for your life. Now, I understand that it may be [00:09:00] difficult to do, but listen, listen. And not necessarily with your ears. Sometimes when I hear God, I hear it, I hear it kind of come from within me. And so be open to hearing from His spirit. The Holy Spirit lives inside of each of us who love Jesus. So expect to receive from Him.

Spend some time reading your Bible to understand His priorities and His guidance.

And I'm reminded of one of my favorite scriptures and it's Proverbs chapter three, verse five and six. And in the Message Translation, this paraphrase really speaks to me. It says it this way, "Trust God from the bottom of your heart. Don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go. He's the one who will keep you on track." That's so good, isn't it? So write down [00:10:00] anything that God reveals to you.

Step two is to examine your gifts and your passions. What are you naturally good at? What excites you? Think about your spiritual gifts if you know them.

Romans chapter 12 verses 6 through 8 in the New International Version says it this way. "We have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith. If it is serving, then serve. If it is teaching, then teach. If it is to encourage, then give encouragement. If it is giving, then give generously. If it is to lead, do so diligently. If it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

First Corinthians chapter 12 is also filled with truth about spiritual gifts, which you can look up on your own time. . But a couple additional questions that you can [00:11:00] ask yourself are what activities bring me joy? Or, where have I seen success or impact? Again, write down anything that God shows you.

Step three is to look at your life experiences. You know, it's interesting how God uses our experiences of the past, both good and the not so good, to prepare us for our calling. In my book, Right Now Matters, I share in chapter 11, how God had used my daughter's experiences of many, many years ago to prepare her for His calling that she is living out today, owning a thriving and prosperous business and blessing others in the process.

You know, and I see this in my son too, as God has just guided him to leave his full time job earlier this month to pursue a calling to better use his God-given talents. [00:12:00] Wow. You know, God uses every single thing we go through. Nothing is wasted. And let me tell you one more thing. I am the first to say that I am thankful for this.

Joseph is a great example of this in the Bible. If you know his story, you, you can probably understand where I'm coming from. But his life was full of one catastrophe after another. But God used all of Joseph's experiences to eventually

become second in command in Egypt. To provide for and save thousands of people.

We may be surprised how God uses our life experiences for the future. Again, write down what past experiences in your own life that you are reminded of today.

Step four is to ask for input from trusted people. If you're unsure about your purpose or calling yet at this [00:13:00] point, then it might be wise to take this step and, and just to, to look at your life and who knows you well and believes in you. Who has a vibrant relationship with God whom you can trust to give you wise counsel? Maybe they're friends or spiritual leaders or personal mentors of yours. But ask these people how they see God's calling in your life.

But I also want to give you a word of caution. Always choose what God shows you above what man tells you. But sometimes these people in our lives, those that know us really well, can affirm our God given gifts and help us see what we can't. My Christian therapist is one of these people that I can trust. Every time I leave her office, I see more of my gifts and additional pieces of my calling than before I walked in.

But [00:14:00] again, God's revelation to me always comes first before anyone else's. Proverbs chapter 15 verse 22 in the New International Version says, "Plans fall apart without proper advice, but with the right guidance, they come together nicely." I love that.

Step five is to start serving. Just simply start serving. Take a step and begin serving in various capacities. Action often clarifies our calling and purpose and it opens the doors for growth. It won't take you long to know if where you're serving is not your calling. I have experienced that. But you will also quickly know what you enjoy and what you want to keep doing. And sometimes God uses that right away to define our calling and to point us in the right [00:15:00] direction.

And step six is to trust God in every step. God's timing is always perfect, as we know. But again, your calling isn't a one time event. It's a journey with God. Obedience in small things often leads to greater opportunities that you and I can't see quite yet.

Luke chapter 16, verse 10 in the New International Version says, "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much. And whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much." When we step out

in the direction that we're led to go, despite any fear or self doubt, or any tendency to compare, or how distracted we may be feeling in the moment, God is honored in our obedience, no matter how small it is.

And if God is [00:16:00] calling us to step out, well, He is walking with us in those steps. We won't have to do this alone. Thank Him for that, right? Great news. Gosh, I'm so glad that we don't have to do this alone. We then just live this out daily. That's it. We live it out. We live out our callings every day by glorifying God in our current roles, no matter how small we may think those roles are.

And some ways that we can live intentionally while pursuing our calling could be staying connected to God through prayer and reading scripture, setting small faith filled goals that are aligned with our passions and our gifts, and celebrating progress as we go, trusting God's plan for our unique purpose and journeys. But let's remember it all begins with just one single step.

So to recap, [00:17:00] we seek God first. We examine our gifts and our passions. We look at our life experiences. We ask for input from trusted people. We start serving. And we trust God in every step. We don't need to do this perfectly, because we won't. But God can use each step to reveal to us our unique purpose and calling. And isn't that what we both want?

I encourage you to begin this process and simply take the first step this week. Don't delay. Just take the first step this week. Pray. Pray daily for clarity and intentionally set your heart to hear from God.

Do you know someone who is struggling to know her purpose or God's calling on her life? Well, go ahead and forward this to her. It may encourage her. And if you found some encouragement today, well then please leave a rating and or review from wherever [00:18:00] you're listening. That would mean so much. And be sure to subscribe if you haven't already. And if you'd like to catch this in video form, you can find us over on YouTube.

Let's close with one more Bible verse just to summarize how important our calling is. And this one is Ephesians chapter two, verse 10 in the New Living Translation. It reminds us, "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." Amen. Friend, I am cheering you on and I'm praying for you this week. As you seek God and His unique purpose for your life, I'm so excited for you. And I can't wait to have God show you what His purpose and calling is for you.

So thank you for tuning in and God bless [00:19:00] you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more at JulieLefebure.com and until next time, stay encouraged.