



People: *The Life We Were Created For*

- A short **RE-CAP** of last week...Values and Courage
 - Our values **cause** us to lean towards God, not away from Him. God is calling us to courageously press in and press on...**Courageous people believe** that nothing is more important to their future than the health of their connection with Jesus!
 - Our values **create** a context for trusting God at deeper and deeper levels, opening the door to take more risks and walk in greater courage...**Courageous people believe** that nothing of true value comes without risk and that “nothing is impossible *with* God!
 - Our values **sustain** us when we run into obstacles and want to quit. This kind of resilience is essential for people who are courageously pursuing their assignment...**Courageous people believe** that God is not only giving them the courage to go forward, but the perseverance to press through resistance.
 - Our values **redirect** us, helping to get back on track when we get distracted and our paths divert us away from the very thing courage has called us to...**Courageous people believe** that mistakes don't mean failure, but are part of the process of growing in boldness as a follower of Jesus.
 - Our values **restore** our hope in the One who originally showed us what is truly valuable and necessary for us to complete the assignment...**Courageous people believe** that faith is dynamic and grows when it is stretched.
- Our **DESTINY** in God
 - **The Sovereignty of God:** One of the most potentially divisive debates in the history of the church centers around the opposing doctrines of salvation known as *Calvinism* and *Arminianism*. **Calvinism** is based on the theological beliefs and teaching of John Calvin (1509-1564), a leader of the Reformation, and **Arminianism** is based on the views of Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). After studying under John Calvin's son-in-law in Geneva, Jacobus Arminius started out as a strict Calvinist. Later, Arminius' studies in the book of Romans led to doubts and rejection of many Calvinistic doctrines.
 - **Calvinism**...centers on the supreme sovereignty of God, predestination, the total depravity of man, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints.
 - **Arminianism**...emphasizes conditional election based on God's foreknowledge, man's free will through prevenient grace (grace that precedes human decision. It exists prior to and without reference to

anything humans may have done) to cooperate with God in salvation, Christ's universal atonement, resistible grace, and salvation that can potentially be lost.

- **Making sense of it all— *What does the Bible say?***

- ✓ ⁸ **God saved you by his grace when you believed.** And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ 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.** (Eph 2:8–10 NLT-SE)
- ✓ You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. **Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.** (Psa 139:16 NLT-SE)
- **God has given you a destiny**, a life that He has created for you to live out. Before you were born, you were "hard wired" with certain talents, desires, drives and ambitions to play a certain role in history. **It's your story. You're the only one that can live it!**
- Unfortunately, the story doesn't end there. You can choose to **walk away from your story** and miss out on God's plan for you. **You have a choice.** If you choose to pursue pleasure, popularity, and money, chances are you'll miss out on God's plan for your life being *fulfilled*.
- God's will is not like an "auto pilot," where you just flip a switch and all of the sudden you are in the will of God, never to drift away from it again. **You have a choice to be a follower of Jesus or a follower of you're own desires.**
- If I get drunk, get in my car, and drive head-on into a tree, killing myself, that wouldn't be God's will for my life! It would be my own stupidity, not God's destiny for me. **God will lead you into your destiny**, giving you the grace to experience unimaginable exploits along the way, but **He will not force you into it.**

- **Let's first define a few important terms:**

- **Destiny...**
 - A simple definition of destiny would be, **"the things you will do, or the person you will become in the future."** Every person born has a destiny.
 - ✓ You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. **Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.** (Psa 139:16 NLT-SE)
 - ✓ **"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." (Jer 1:5 NLT-SE)
 - ✓ ²³ **The LORD directs the steps of the godly.** He delights in every detail of their lives. ²⁴ Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand. (Psa 37:23–24 NLT-SE)
 - **But, not every one of us has a destiny in God.** Jesus has an eternal destiny. The we believe in Him and are born again, we enter into a unique relationship with Jesus where we now **SHARE IN**

HIS DESTINY. We are now “in Christ,” who is a perfect representation of God’s will on earth. Buckle up!

- ✓ Even before he made the world, **God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault** in his eyes. (Eph 1:4 NLT-SE)
- ✓ 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. (Eph 2:10 NLT-SE)
- ✓ Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about **the endless treasures available to them in Christ**. (Eph 3:8 NLT-SE)
- ✓ Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. **His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus**. (Phil 4:7 NLT-SE)
- ✓ So I am willing to endure anything if it will bring **salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus** to those God has chosen. (2 Tim 2:10 NLT-SE)
- ✓ And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you **understand** and **experience** all the good things we have in Christ. (Philem 1:6 NLT-SE)

- **Calling/Vocation...**

- Calling or vocation—both are used in the same way—not as an occupation or "line of work," but something that **describes our engagement with the world in response to God**.
- A calling is always a **demonstration of the love and initiative of God**, but through vocation we also come to an appreciation that **God takes us seriously**. ~ *Gordon T. Smith. Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential*
- **Called of God: The Three Expressions of Vocation**
 - **The Central Call...**The invitation to follow Jesus, to be Christian.
 - **The Specific Call...**A vocation that is unique to a person, that individual’s mission in the world.
 - **The Immediate Responsibilities...**Those tasks or duties God calls us to today.

- **Job or Work...**

- **”What do *you* do for a living?”**
 - ✓ **Whatever you do, do well**. For when you go to the grave, there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom. (Eccl 9:10 NLT-SE)
 - “What matters is not where we work, whether at an entry-level day job or a dream company. **What matters to God is how we work**—with diligence, with excellence, with self-sacrifice that honors Him and serves others.” ~ *Does God Care Where You Work?*, by Kyle Stewart

- STEWARDING the life we've been given

- We've all been give a life to live. God has given us free will to choose what that life will look like and how we will respond to changes that come up in life. We ought to take seriously our responses. According to **Gordon Smith**, "Taking our lives seriously means that we respond intentionally to these circumstances and the transitions of life. But we will only do so if and when we recognize three things:
 - First, our lives are of **inestimable value**.
 - Second, living our lives to the full is precisely what it means to be good **stewards of our lives**.
 - Third, we live fully by living in a way that is deeply **congruent with who we are**."
 - So, in the **ordinary duties of life**, we will have opportunities to make the work we do, **good work**, or not.
- Thinking too much of ourself eventually leads to **pride**, but thinking too little of ourselves says that **we simply choose not to believe who God says we are!** This is just **the other side of pride**, when we believe we know who we are and what we're like better than God.
- **It takes real courage to believe what God says about YOU is true.** But that is exactly what the Father has called us to do. He wants us to know just how much we're worth and what He is capable of doing through us!

- The COURAGE to be who we were created to be

- **The COURAGE and WISDOM it takes to be who we were created to be...**True courage will always require wisdom to bear fruit.
 - Leadership takes vision, but **sometimes we mistake huge dreams and vision for courage**. We need to ask ourselves, "Is courage behind this dream I have, or just pride and presumption? In the same way, **leaning mostly on your own talent and gifting** to achieve your dream is fraught with danger.
 - ✓ ⁵ If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. ⁶ But when you ask him, **be sure that your faith is in God alone.** (James 1:5–6 NLT-SE)
- **The GRATITUDE and HUMILITY it takes to be who we were created to be...**Without gratitude and humility, moral integrity is nothing more than moralism and judgmentalism.
 - Gratitude is the virtue of **celebrating the goodness of God and living with a conviction that God is indeed good**.
 - Gratitude is the recognition that what I have received comes to me from the overflowing goodness and love of God. It is also a recognition that this love is an unmerited gift. To be a Christian is to live in profound gratitude for the unmerited, overwhelming love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

✓ ¹⁶ Always be joyful. ¹⁷ Never stop praying. ¹⁸ Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Th 5:16–18 NLT-SE)

- **The PATIENCE it takes to be who we were created to be...** Wherever you find genuine courage in a person, you will also find **a history and appreciation for patience.**
 - When it comes to our calling or vocation, one of the **great temptations** is thinking that we should act immediately on what we feel called to do. But, God often works slowly and his ways are often subtle and almost indiscernible. **He is never in a hurry.**
 - **True courage is accompanied by patience**—with God, with others, and with yourself. Patience means trusting that your calling will be fulfilled eventually; we do not need to grasp after it or jump at opportunities prematurely.
 - Being patient does *not* mean that we do nothing, but that we trust God with our future and fully engage with the present to **enjoy** the moment, **learn** from it and **serve** through the opportunities that are given to us rather than sitting around waiting.
- **THE COURAGE TO BE...**
 - The real question is, “**Do you have to the courage to live?**” When we do, we find joy, for joy is choice to be courageous and say “Yes” to who you are created to be! Our “yes” is rooted in the basic assumption that **God created us good.**
 - Acknowledging our fears does not in itself make us courageous. But, when we acknowledge our fears, we can then ask if they are legitimate and whether we are really living in faith, hope and love.
 - It takes courage: the courage to be, the courage to be true to who we are, even if it means living on the edge, living with risk, living with less security, less influence and less power, because it means that we have chosen the way that is true to who we are, **true to ourselves**, selves, **true to our call.**
~ Gordon T. Smith. *Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential*

³ I (Paul) give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, **measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.** ⁴ Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other...⁹ Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. ¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other...¹⁶ Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

(Rom 12:3-5, 9-10, 16 NLT-SE)