



ON PURPOSE

By Rebecca Mulvaney

“Mommy! He’s messing up the game . . . on purpose!” The last two words, elongated by an indignant whine, emphasized the motive of the culprit. Little brother is not only messing up; he’s doing it “on purpose!”

Some years later, I realized I was the one messing up, but it wasn’t on purpose. On this particular day, I was running late for everything. Breakfast Bible study with teenaged girls at McDonald’s. Aerobics class at the synagogue. A quick shower. A committee meeting with moms from school. Tutoring after lunch. Carpooling after school. Chauffeuring one child to a piano lesson, one to soccer practice. Pant, pant. After transporting my soccer player to play practice, I drove my pianist home to change for her volleyball game. The phone was ringing as I walked in the door; it was my husband, wanting to know what’s for supper. Supper? I had the keen sense I was living a full life (at a fast pace), but I wasn’t living “on purpose.”

Purpose implies a plan and a commitment to priorities. Plan and priorities? It seemed I was living according to everyone else’s plans, and my priority had become getting everybody where they wanted to be—somewhere close-to-on-time. Fulfillment eluded me as I moved through my maze of demands, opportunities, and commitments. If God had any other plans for my day, I’m sure I viewed them as annoying interruptions.

As I study Jesus’ life, I continually note His choices. He knew his time on earth was limited, yet his purpose-filled life looked so different from mine. No watch, no appointment book, no beeper, no cell-phone. While his Father’s will dictated his choices, my family’s needs and demands had usurped mine. I was most startled at Jesus’ choice as he responded to the life-and-death call to heal Jairus’

dying daughter in Mark 5:21-43. In spite of the urgency of the little girl's need, He stopped (yes, stopped!) to inquire who had touched his garment. He paused to speak with the woman who needed the peace and freedom which only He could offer.

Jesus never lost sight of His purpose—not for one minute. By the end of three years, He was able to say to His Father, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." (John 17:4) By investing His time, minute-by-minute, He successfully spent His life. As I hold up the use of my time alongside God's priorities for my life, I often see wheels spinning instead of a life of purpose.

The challenge of my life on earth is to translate my lifelong priority into my daily realities. As I plan my day, my week, month or year, I check for alignment with my purpose of glorifying God. Sometimes the urgent will have to wait, the complicated will have to be simplified, the "must-do's" will have to go undone. If I am to fulfill my purpose, I must learn to live life "on purpose."

He has showed you, O man [woman], what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

Reflect & Respond:

- 1) What is your purpose for living? (What do you think God put you on this earth for?)
- 2) Do your "daily realities" expose your lifelong priority? (Or are you side-tracked by meeting others' demands and fulfilling commitments that have nothing to do with your life-purpose?)
- 3) What change could you make (this week or this Fall) to align your life with your God-given purpose? (This might involve an act of simplifying, saying "not now" or "no" to others' expectations, or proactively choosing to cultivate an opportunity to fulfill your life purpose.)



Rebecca (Bekah) Mulvaney seeks to fulfill her purpose of glorifying God through her writing and teaching, encouraging friends, and nurturing her family to enjoy and worship our One True Lord. She facilitates a workshop on the Fellowship campus, entitled "The Journey toward Significance," challenging and equipping women to live out their personal mission and God's unique calling in their life.