

## STUDY GUIDE: LIVING THE APPLIED LIFE (MODULE 202)

### Lesson #1 – Applied to Our Life Purpose: Discovering Your Fire Within

*Discover what God created you for by identifying your God-given passions, your God-given talents, and your God-given purpose. Find something you love and are gifted to do that will fulfill a calling and have an eternal impact.*

The overwhelming majority of people on this planet never really discover the unique life purpose for which God created them. It seems that the materialism and the pursuit of all things good in this life have overshadowed the deeper meaning of our life's purpose. Few people, even serious Christians, are tuned in to the idea of finding and fulfilling their life purpose and divine destiny.

I think this is the reason Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life* was such a runaway best seller even in secular circles. His book touched a nerve in all of us who want to believe that life in general—and our individual lives specifically—must have some greater meaning and purpose. Oliver Wendell Holmes described the sad futility most people experience when he wrote, “Many people die with their music still in them.” In other words, what all these people could have been, and should have been, was never realized.

In the story of Esther, during a secret meeting, her Uncle Mordecai reveals to her a plot to kill all the Jews (of which she is one). What he said to her was hugely profound. He connected this crisis of extinction for the Jews to her unlikely rise to become Queen of Persia. Mordecai asks her, “*And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?*” (Esther 4:14). He was basically saying, “Could it be, Esther, that the reason God made you Queen is because He wants you to save His people from destruction?” Talk about feeling a sense of destiny.

There is something deep within our very beings that nag at us to find some meaning and purpose for our lives. Too often, we try to satisfy this nagging need for purpose by making lots of money, accumulating lots of nice things, being a workaholic, pursuing power and prestige, etc. A multimillionaire told me some years ago—after spending a lifetime dedicated to climbing the ladder of success—that once he had finally reached the top he discovered, to his bitter disappointment, that “the ladder was leaning against the wrong wall.” All that he had gained in the climb to “success” was totally overshadowed by what he had lost in its pursuit—his health, his wife, his family, and his friendships.

So, how can we discover what God has really created us to do? There are three areas that must be considered if we are going to find our life purpose.

#### **#1. God has hard-wired into each of us certain God-given passions.**

These God-given passions are the things that excite us, motivate us, and bring us enjoyment. It may be sports, building things, some moral or social cause, learning, or the arts. Each of us possesses a unique combination of God-given passions. God gave us those passions to point us towards a specific purpose and enable us to fulfill it.

## **#2. God has given us a unique set of talents.**

These God-given talents are the things that come naturally to us. For some, it is the ability to sing or teach or an athletic ability or some mechanical insight or understanding. Some people are incredibly artistic, while others have a natural ability to dream of what could be. The way to know you have a God-given talent is that you are better at it than you should be for the time and effort you have put into it. The youth who picks up a basketball and right from the first time he touches the ball he is above average at the game. Or the young lady who captivates all by her singing and yet has never once taken a voice lesson. I had a friend in college who had never taken one piano lesson yet he could sit down and play the piano like he had been taking lessons all his life. He could not read a note of music, but if he could hear the music, he could play it. God has given each of us a unique set of God-given talents for a purpose.

## **#3. God has planted within each of our hearts some God-given purpose.**

This God-given purpose has some divine, eternal intention for which we have been created. I am not talking about a general purpose like worshiping Him or living a godly life. These things apply to all of us. I am talking about some specific purpose that He wants us to accomplish for Him with our lives.

When you find something to do with your life that is fueled by your God-given passions, utilizes your God-given talents, and accomplishes a God-given purpose, you will find what I call “the fire within.” Engaging in this activity will bring complete fulfillment and will leave you totally energized. It is like when you hit the sweet spot on a baseball bat—you hit a homerun! Now do not think that in order to find your fire within, you need to go into some fulltime Christian work, become a pastor, missionary, or Bible college professor. Obviously, those are worthy life purposes for those whom God has given the passion, talent, and calling to do those specific kinds of ministries.

Instead, you may be like one Christian man I know. Since he was sixteen years old, he felt called by God to be a businessman. He used his passions and talents coupled with this God-given call to build a very substantial family business. He and his family are now impacting people worldwide with their Christian witness. They also have millions of dollars to give away from the success God has given them. I know another commercial real estate developer who is using his passion for real estate and his talent for making multi-million dollar deals so he can support Kingdom causes that God has laid on his heart. This is his God-given purpose.

Most of you have seen how Tony Dungy, retired coach for the Indianapolis Colts, has used his God-given passion and talent for football as a platform to share the message of Christ with literally millions of people all over the world who would otherwise never step foot into a church building—another worthy God-given purpose.

If you do not want to die with “your music still in you,” then I encourage you to discover what God created you for by identifying your God-given passions, your God-given talents, and your God-given purpose. Find something you love and are gifted to do that will fulfill a calling and have an eternal impact. In so doing, you will indeed discover your *fire within*.

## STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. Share some of the things that you are currently involved in that you are passionate about?
2. How is the story of Esther such a great example of realizing your destiny and finding your “fire within”?
3. What would other people who know you best say are your greatest talents or gifts?
4. How are you currently utilizing those talents in a way that are useful to the Kingdom?
5. Have you discovered your God-given purpose for your life? If so, share what it is. If not, share why you think you are yet to find it?
6. What can you do in the future to use your God-given passions and God-given talents to achieve your specific God-given purpose?
7. What do you think are some of the hindrances to people discovering their “fire within”?
8. Discuss what it might look like for someone who lives his/her entire life and never discovers his/her life purpose?
9. What are the obstacles that keep you from being able to pursue what you are MADE to do?
10. What is going to change in your life going forward because of this lesson? What are you going to start doing differently?