

M 2 · W E E K T W O

Design Reveals Destiny

Who we are — discovering the unique design God built into you, and the gifts He gave you to fulfill it.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Why am I here?

WEEK TWO

Why am I here?

EPHESIANS 2:10 · NIV

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Last week we learned that God made man to be fruitful, to multiply, and to subdue the earth. We are "more than conquerors," as Paul wrote in Romans 8:37. Yet for some reason, many men I know don't feel like conquerors. I know seemingly successful men — titans of industry, even faithful, Kingdom-minded men — who still ask, "Why am I here? I still feel like I'm not fulfilling my calling."

The two greatest days in a man's life are the day he's born, and the day he finds out why.

MARK TWAIN

Let's ask the question, "Why am I here?" It is the first question of existentialism. Though that philosophy places man at the center of the universe, we know man is under the authority and loving care of a God who pursues us, loves us, and knows the number of hairs on our heads. Still, it is a great question. The God who knows everything about you — your Designer — is calling you to something greater than yourself. Many men live to become famous, rich, and powerful, only to find those things satisfy a hunger for a season but ultimately leave us empty. **Ecclesiastes 3:11** says He has planted eternity in the human heart. The desire for eternity is within us; we long to leave a legacy.

All men die, but few men ever live.

WILLIAM WALLACE

What is eternal? What in this world will last more than a few decades, or centuries, or even a millennium? Nothing — not championships or money or power or accolades. Nothing survives the fire of eternity except the souls of those around us. If we are to draw out the deep waters of purpose, we must understand that our destiny is found only through others. You were called to make a difference in other people's lives. Everything else is ancillary.

WEEK TWO

You are unique

There has never been another *you* in the annals of history. God uniquely designed you, and there will never be another person like you. Even an identical twin — genetically the same — is uniquely made in every other way. When God made you, He broke the mold.

He carefully made you, studying every aspect, knowing full well what you would experience and what to equip you with, before one minute of your life had passed. Your unique design reveals your destiny. God made you for a journey, and being a good God, He gave you everything you will need before you embark.

- He gave you everything you need to be fruitful.
- He gave you everything you need to multiply.
- He gave you everything you need to subdue the earth.
- He gave you everything you need to be a conqueror.

When we analyze how we're made, we can begin to determine what good works God has prepared for us. **Proverbs 20:5** says, "The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out." Insight comes through analysis. So let's put ourselves under the microscope and ask the great existential question — *why am I here?* We know it is for a good work God has prepared; learning who we are will help us find it. This acrostic will help you remember the aspects of your design:

S — Spiritual Gifts — what God equips you with to build His Kingdom.

H — Heart — what you are most passionate about.

A — Abilities — the natural talents you were born with.

P — Personality — the way God wired you to engage the world.

E — Experience — all you have lived through, good and bad.

WEEK TWO

What are spiritual gifts?

GENESIS 1:26 • NIV

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Spiritual gifts are gifts God gave you to equip you to help build His Kingdom. You were made in God's image. That doesn't mean you have the jawline of Christ or His gait — you resemble Him *spiritually*, in the eternal ways. You have a spirit, a soul, and a body; you are an eternal being. Jesus had an earthly body that died and was buried, but His spirit went to paradise that very day. He told the thief in **Luke 23:43**, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." This spiritual makeup is essential to understanding our purpose — and spiritual gifts are different from physical gifts like music or intelligence.

WEEK TWO

Knowing the Father

If we are made in His image, then the more we understand about our Father, the better we understand ourselves. The best way to understand Him is to spend time with Him — to read the gift of His Word, and to seek Him. **Jeremiah 29:13** promises, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

We can also understand who we are by looking at the personality of God Himself. God presented Himself as a male figure for a reason. He could have presented Himself as female, but He chose to be male for a purpose. Part of the answer lies in how we described the role of a father last week:

- Protector
- Teacher
- Courageous
- Loving
- Counselor
- Provider
- Strong
- Just
- Honorable
- Peacemaker

We know what a good father is because God placed it in our hearts. **Romans 2:15** says God's law is written on our hearts, so that our conscience and thoughts either accuse us or tell us we are doing right. As societies formed, they shared a similar moral code, because God wrote that code deep within us. Something rises in us at injustice; we love stories of triumph, and we long to see the innocent set free, no matter our affiliation. God places that hunger for righteousness within us — the good father is within you, but only Christ can draw him out.

WEEK TWO

Men are different than women

Why did God present Himself as a male figurehead? I believe it is because our design and role as men is an important one. If you are a man, you are a leader. God made you to be the

spiritual head of your home — with Jesus as your covering, and God the covering of Christ. That is the spiritual order God designed; when we depart from it, we find confusion and, ultimately, chaos.

EPHESIANS 5:23–25 · NKJV

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.

Your role as the leader of your home is yours — but you must step into it. It is an active role, not a passive one. It requires diligence, vision, and direction. God has a vision for your life; do you have a vision for your family? Do you pray over your wife, standing in the gap for her weakness? Do you pray over your children as they grow into young adults? Do you create a spiritual action plan for them? If you don't, who will? Seize your role as the spiritual leader and provide spiritual food for your family.

THE SPIRITUAL ORDER

God

Jesus

Man · Husband

Woman · Wife

Children

WEEK TWO

A man's needs

Men have different needs than women — physical, emotional, and spiritual. God presented Himself as male for a reason; His design is similar to ours. He demonstrates His own needs through the Ten Commandments. The first four are about Him and our relationship with Him. Here is a summary of the first four, found in Exodus 20:

- ① Do not have any other gods before Me.
- ② Do not make an image of anything and worship it.

- ③ Do not take My name in vain.
- ④ Honor My day.

God says in verse 5, "For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God." What is He jealous of? *You* — your heart and your worship. I don't know many men who would be glad if their wife came home talking about a great-looking man she met at work. You'd be jealous, and rightfully so. We need to be honored as God needs to be honored; we need to be the only one for our wives, as God needs to be the only one in our lives. We are made like God. We desire honor.

REFLECT

What is honor? What does it mean to you?

WEEK TWO

The gifts we receive

Remember, you were called to be a warrior. When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he told us to put on the armor of God — the very armor a Roman soldier wore. He wasn't describing a passive life; the daily task is to take up the weapons of warfare and get ready for a fight. You won't feel useful until you are engaged in the battle. Our primary battle is spiritual.

You may think your battle is your boss, or your bills, or your kids acting up. But **Ephesians 6:12** says our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, and the powers of this dark world. If our battle is in the spiritual realm, then it is time we engage there. First, we must understand our role on the battlefield. In a normal battle you might be a gunner, a pilot, or a drone operator. In **Ephesians 4:11**, Paul names the roles God gave His army: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers.

Apostle — sent on a mission from God.

Prophet — a messenger from God.

Evangelist — one who shares the Gospel with the lost.

Pastor — a shepherd of God's people.

Teacher — an instructor in the truth.

These are the main roles of a church, and every Christian should operate in their gifts. Gifts can be nurtured and grown. You may not have the gift of teaching, but you can still teach a small group; you may not be a pastor, but you can still guide a friend through a divorce. The gifts of the Spirit aren't to be confused with the offices of the church — as a father you'll pastor and teach your children; as a friend to the lost, you may be just the evangelist he needs. Ask God to lead you in how to use your gifts. He will. Scripture lists many more:

- Serving, encouraging, giving, leadership, mercy (**Romans 12**)
- Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, discernment, tongues (**1 Corinthians 12**)
- Helps and government

WEEK TWO

Week Two summary

After you've taken the Spiritual Gifts Test, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how you should use the gifts God has given you. God wants you to start now.

There is a task for you to do today. He has a plan. Put one foot in front of the other, ask God to lead you, and keep putting your own will in the back seat every time it tries to drive. You are uniquely you. You were made to do good works — and those good works start now. Ask God what His plan is for you, daily. You don't have to wait; your purpose begins right where you are, and as you grow and nurture the gifts God has given you, He will expand your territory.

◆ HOMEWORK

Take the Spiritual Gifts Test

Set aside some quiet, honest time and take the spiritual gifts inventory at the link below. Bring your results to next week's gathering so we can go through them together.
spiritualgiftstest.com