

Help I'm Lost / Finding God's purpose for your Life

Tita: I clearly remember the knot I felt in my stomach when my brothers and sisters and I realized that our mum was not well. She was suffering from severe depression and although she had begun receiving help, it was going to take time before she would be herself again. My mum was normally a bubbly, active, person. She was always full of energy and new ideas – a very bright person who loved to find out new and interesting things...

Tammy: Welcome to *Women of Hope*, I'm Tammy. How are you doing today Carol?

Carol: I'm fine thanks...

Tammy: We have Tita with us today to continue her story. Welcome Tita.

Tita: Thank you...

Carol: Let's hear more of Tita's story...

Tita: ...It was so sad to come home from a day at school to find my mum in her bedroom, sleeping...quietly reading...or worse still – crying. When we asked her: "Mum, why are you crying?" She would simply say: "I don't know darling, but try not to worry. I'm sure that soon I will be ok".

Thankfully, a couple of years later, after following the advice of her doctor and counselor, my mum bounced back! She began to understand what they said to her: "Your problem is that you got lost in your life." You see Mum had a job and a career...she felt needed and important. But then she had become a wife and a mother, and these roles and activities took over her life. She was a loving wife and a good mother, but by the time we were at school all day she began to feel that she was no longer needed or useful. She began to feel negative feelings, like emptiness...and fear of the future. She just couldn't get motivated to do things...and eventually she became depressed.

"You need to rediscover the *real you* and your PURPOSE in life," her counselor said to her. And so she began a journey to find out who she really was and what would bring back her sense of purpose...

Tammy: As you are listening to these words, I wonder if perhaps you feel lost in your life too. You may be lost in the *business* of your life... lost in the shadows of your husband's job and career...

Maybe as the mother of young children you're so busy, yet you feel that your job is not important...

Maybe you're lost in a world where you know that you need to earn money and work to support your family but you find no satisfaction in this.

Tita: Could it be that like my mum you are going on with your everyday life...doing all the things others expect you to do...but you feel like a ship without a rudder, being tossed by the waves in all sorts of directions...you just cannot find the *right* direction? You cannot find your *purpose* in life.

Well, if this is you today, let me encourage you... Did you know that having a sense of value and purpose in life is a totally normal human need? We all need to know that we are important to someone... that we are valued by someone...that we make a difference. Just the very fact that we are *alive* means that there *is* a purpose for our life...

Tammy: Here on *Women of Hope* today we have Tita telling the story of how her mother became depressed because she felt she had lost her way in life...

I wonder.... Have you ever stopped to think that *what you DO* is different than *WHO you are*? *What you do* may be very important, but if you understand *who you are* you can start to work out your purpose...

Tita: Mum began to understand that she is a *caring* person, someone who is compassionate and always willing to help others. She cares about people and loves to help in practical ways. After her time of depression, she had to find ways to still be herself...and satisfy her need to show her love and care for others at this different stage of her life.

Mum went out, and faced the fears that came with having been out of the paid working world. She began to help blind people. She also taught high school girls for a number of years. In **DOING** something so different she found she could now be *WHO* she really was. She could rediscover her life's purpose. She has continued over the years caring for her children, her husband, her grandchildren and people with all kinds of different needs out in her community. She found her purpose in life again.

What about you? Are you feeling dissatisfied and frustrated in your life because what you are **DOING** is not satisfying? Do you have feelings of emptiness, fear, or even depression because you feel that there is no purpose in your life?

No matter who you are, your life has a purpose. How can you discover it?

Tammy: No matter who you are, your life has a purpose. How can you discover it?...

Tita: ...Stop, take time to think about it: *WHO* are you?...

What kinds of things motivate and excite you?...

When do you feel the happiest?...

If you're not sure about the answers to these questions, ask your friends, or relatives or people who know you well. As you begin to discover who you really are you will start understanding what your life's purpose is...

Have you always enjoyed teaching people things but have not had a chance to study and become a teacher? Does teaching something to another person bring a smile to your face and a warm feeling to your heart? ...But you have to support yourself by doing an office job that you don't particularly like...or doing cleaning for someone else...or maybe working in the garden.

Let me tell you...you can still find your purpose! You can learn about something that interests you and then offer to teach that subject at your community centre, or share your new skill with other women. Or you can offer to help children who need help with school homework. You might be surprised when you realize that what you thought was a boring, or uninteresting job is more bearable because somehow you are fulfilling your real life purpose in other ways!

We all face changes in life...different seasons...but *you will always be YOU*. Look for opportunities, at each stage in your life, to do the things that give *your life* purpose. It takes effort, but the sense of satisfaction you experience will be well worth it!

Carol: On *Women of Hope* we have just been talking about finding your purpose in life...and knowing who you are...what things you most enjoy doing...what makes you the happiest...

Tita: Let me ask you a question... How *well* do you know yourself? Some people feel uncomfortable when they are asked this question... Why? Because they do not have a very good self-image or picture of themselves... they are not sure that they are really valuable to others.

Some of us may not have had a lot of opportunities in life...we may not have had a lot of education...you may have had to go to work from a young age. You may have a physical disability and so you could not get a regular job. You may have had to give up your own personal ambitions and dreams in order to take care of an elderly or sick relative. Perhaps you have been rejected by someone close to you and told that you are no good.

Sometimes people say things about us that give us a label...

Carol: Oh yes I know what you mean. When I was young I felt I was labeled as 'stupid' (*or whatever you were labeled*) by my teacher (*or whoever labeled you*). They always talked about me like this and didn't seem to notice the things I was really good at.

Tita: That's right – other people might say we're "not good enough"... or "too slow"... "not the brightest in the family"... "divorced"... or "the one who lost their job".

Carol: And if this is not enough, we sometimes create our *own* labels don't we? We may have a low opinion of ourselves...we continually compare ourselves with someone we look up to.

Tita: What a difference it would make if we looked up to someone and tried to *learn* from them instead of putting ourselves down! Our thoughts are very powerful... thoughts like these can make us believe we're not good enough.

Carol: ...And soon we'll start to think that *everyone else* lives a good life and has a purpose...but *we* don't!

Tita: Yes...you might think, *What would someone like me have to offer?* As long as you think like this, you will surely achieve less than you could... You may lose your sense of purpose ...just as my mother did all those years ago.

Carol: Here on *Women of Hope*, Tita asked the question: *What would someone like me have to offer?* If you feel this way, we would like to share something very special with you...

Tita: How would you feel if I told you that there is someone who loves you just as you are? ...Who knows everything about you but is not *ever* going to compare you with anybody else. This person knows all the positive and good qualities that you have as well as all those negative thoughts you have...and they *still* love you. Someone who knows your full potential...what you *are* able to achieve... And do you know, *that someone* knows exactly WHO you are and therefore knows the perfect purpose for your life! Can you imagine that?

I can almost hear you asking yourself: "But who is this someone that knows all about me? Who can know me so well when I don't have any idea who that someone is?"

Let me tell you...that very special someone...is God. God is very powerful, and he *made* you so he *knows* you even better than you know yourself. And he loves you *very* much. He created you exactly as you are because he has a perfect plan and purpose for your life. This is not just what *I* think, it's what I read in God's word, the Bible. God clearly says to every person he has created: "I know the plans I have for you, they are plans to benefit you, not to harm you. They are to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Wow, I was so amazed the first time I read this, because it means that there is a *unique purpose* for my life! God has it all planned! As I thought more and more about this and looked at people around me, I began noticing how different God's creation is. We all are so different in our physical looks, our character, our personalities, and of course in our life experiences. And yet God has a unique and very specific purpose for each of our lives.

Can you see how exciting this is? No matter how you feel about yourself – what you can or cannot do, God has a special purpose for your life. How would you feel if you knew that being exactly *who* you are, and right *where* you are, whatever you have gone through...good or bad, God is able to help you find the purpose he has for your life?

Carol: Tita asked...*How would you feel if you knew that God is able to help you find the purpose he has for your life?*... Let's talk some more about that.

Tita: Well...you may think your position is useless or hopeless...or even a dead end- but it may be the exact place where God can meet you... and begin to show you his purpose.

His greatest purpose is not about what you *do* in life. It's about how you *relate to him*. He made you, and loves you. He wants to be in a loving relationship with you. This is why he sent Jesus into this world. He wants to forgive you for all those things that have kept you apart...and take them right away. And he invites you to come to him. You can do that by trusting in Jesus Christ, who took the punishment for all those wrong things.

And God's next purpose is to help you become the person he made you to be - a good person in every way. Jesus is our great example of what we can be like.

Yes, God wants to show you what he is like. He wants to become part of your life. The amazing thing is that as you learn who *he* is, you also learn who *you* are! You will be able to see the 'real you' as God sees you... not the person you may *think* you are because of things that have happened in your life.

If you have life...you *have* a purpose! If you want to discover that purpose, God is just waiting for you to invite Him into your life... And then you can ask him to show you the unique purpose for which He created *you*.

Carol: I'm sure God has special things for *you* to do, things that will use the qualities and talents that he has shaped in *you*. Ask him to show you how you can live the most rewarding purposeful life you could ever dream of!

God is waiting to help you but he will never force himself into your life. He gives you a choice...the choice is yours, what will it be?

Tammy: It's almost time to finish *Women of Hope* for today. But before we do, let's hear what one of our listeners said about finding hope and a purpose for her life:

My name is Lena (changed name). I have learned a lot from the *Women of Hope* program. I used to be a person without hope. I tried many times to kill myself by taking medications. My husband is a drunkard and he never treated me well, so I became depressed. He drinks all the time.

One day I started to go to a women's group that studies the Bible in my village. Through the Bible study, I have been helped to see hope, and because of hope, I came out of the depression. After I listened to *Women of Hope* I gave my life to Jesus. My children also gave their life to him as well. Now we have found hope in the Lord, Jesus Christ. I now have a job and a purpose for living.

Please pray for my husband to believe in Jesus with the rest of us, so that his life will be changed. Pray that he will stop drinking and stop going around doing nothing. Pray that he will get a job and that he will start to think about spending time with his children and his wife.

Carol: Let's pray for this woman and her children now...and that her husband will find Jesus and find his purpose in life – that he will find a job and learn to enjoy spending time with his family. Would you like to pray for them Tammy?

Tammy: Sure...

Father God, who made us and loves us as we are, thank you for the story we heard today about Tita's mother and how she found her purpose in life. We thank you that this listener has also found you. We pray for her and her children that they will grow in their faith and learn to trust you each day. We pray especially for her husband, that he will also find his hope in you and stop drinking all the time. We pray that he will find a job and find the purpose you have for his life. We pray in the powerful name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Carol: Remember – God has a special purpose for your life. You can find it if you ask him. We do enjoy hearing from you so why not write us? As we end our time today, our prayer is that you have a great week filled with God's blessings.

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