

Intentional Living: Art of Living with Purpose

Psalm 27:4

START CONVERESATION

Would you rather not be able to open any closed doors (locked or unlocked) or not be able to close any open doors?

Would you rather live in a house filled with mannequins dressed as clowns or a house filled with porcelain dolls?

START TALKING

If you could ask God for one thing and only one thing, what would you ask God to do for you? Think about that. And you cannot say, "I'd ask him for more wishes." That's off the table. Maybe you'd ask for a lifetime gift card for Chick-fil-A. Christian chicken for the glory of God. On a serious note, maybe you would say, "I would ask God to heal someone that I love that is sick." Or maybe, "I would ask God to help me overcome this addiction that I've been unable to overcome." There are some that might think bigger than that, "I would ask God to end human trafficking."

Yesterday, we launched a new series called "*Intentional Living: The Art of Living with Purpose.*" When we learn to live with intention, we discover that the decisions we make today lead to a God-Honoring life tomorrow. In this message series, we'll talk about decision-making because, let's be honest, all of us want to make really good, wise, healthy, helpful and God-honoring decisions, but we often don't live up to our good intentions? We often eat more than we should, spend more than we make, say things we shouldn't say, and even do things we shouldn't do. So, instead of waiting to make decisions later on (*when we may not be at our best, or when we might be tired, or when we might be emotional*) we're going to decide, in the here and now, to be intentional in our everyday living.

This evening, we start in Old Testament where we find King David. Before anything else, and amidst all of his shortcomings and mistakes, he decided to be intentional in prioritizing intimacy with God. Now, why would he do that? Why would he decide that being close to God is a worthy pursuit?

The answer is simple: you never end up close to God accidentally. Nobody does that. Why? Because there is no such thing as **INTIMACY WITHOUT INTENTIONALITY**. In marriages, couples don't get close if they don't work on getting close. You'll never be really close with your children accidentally. That same principle is true with God. You will never be close to God accidentally. It takes work and intentionality to experience intimacy with God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

If you could ask God for one thing, what would it be?

1. Step One: Desperate for God's Presence

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. Psalm 63:1-3 NIV

One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. Psalm 27:4 NIV

David said, this is the one thing I ask, "I want the presence of God." If you look through his life, even when he had the blessings of running the kingdom, he was desperate for the presence of God.

The Bible talks about the reality that we can actually be friends with God. That is an amazing thought that the Holy God would allow us to call him a friend. Why is it important that we intentional pursue that friendship? Because every demon in hell will lie to you and tempt you to distract you from chasing after God. The world wants us to pursue anything and everything but God. We are pursuing things of this world thinking it will make us happy.

If you continue down that road long enough, you're going to end up doing something dumb. You end up lost and without purpose. We need God.

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That's why we **MUST** be intentional about our pursuit for intimacy with God. We **MUST** choose ahead of time to be intentional, passionate, and faithful in that pursuit. We need to have a desperation for God. A "without Him I am sunk" attitude.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Share about a time when you were desperate for God's presence. How did you seek Him, and what did you learn about Him through that process?

2. Step Two: Desperate for God's Word

God speaks to us in many ways BUT his clearest and most powerful expression comes through the *rhema*, the living word of God. God has, and will always, speak through the *logos*, the written word. How do we KNOW God and why do we **KNOW** that God loves us? Because God talks to us very intimately through the word. We **MUST** intentionally pursue God through the word. It's the words that God delivers to us through His spirit that creates the knowledge that leads to the love and the intimacy that we have.

HOW DO YOU GET TO KNOW GOD? It's by reading his word. His word is his love letter to you that reveals who he is and what his purpose and will is for you and for us as a part of the body of Christ. We don't read his word because we have to. We read it because we want to. I read it because I'm desperate for it.

In fact, if you watch the way David described the word of God or what he called the law, the scripture, this is how David described it in Psalm 19. He used several adjectives to describe the word of God. This is what he said. He said, **"The instructions... are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy. The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight for living."** Psalm 19:7-8, 10 NLT

WHAT DOES THE WORD OF GOD DO FOR YOU? God's Word will do whatever you need it to do. God's Word will give you whatever you need to receive.

We **MUST** intentionally make time for God's word. We **MUST** **"hunger and thirst for His righteousness."** (Matthew 5:6). We need his strength, his wisdom, his comfort, and the power of his spirit. We **MUST** become desperate for his word.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Psalm 19:7-8, 10 says, **"The instructions of the LORD are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy ... The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living. ... They are more desirable than gold ... They are sweeter than honey ..."** Psalm 19:7-8, 10

What words stand out to you about the way David describes God's Word? What words would you use to talk about the Bible with someone else?

3. Step Three: Desperate for God's Church

Desperate for God's church. And I want you to see just how desperate David was as well. David said in Psalm 122:1, **"I Rejoiced with Those Who Said to Me, 'Let Us Go to The House of the LORD.'" Psalm 122:1**

We rejoice with those who said, **"Hey, let's all go to church together."** Why do we need to be intentional in our pursuit of going to church? Because God is good, because he is worthy of our praise, and, selfishly, because we all got stuff. I've got hurts and you have hurts. And we actually don't just need God. We need God through each other. Sometimes we like the presence of God with skin on it. We ALL need the body of Christ. We ALL need each other.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

How has the church made a positive impact in your life?

START PRAYING

Father, thank You for wanting a relationship with us. Please help us to grow closer to You. We want to experience Your presence, understand Your Word, and be a part of Your Church. In Jesus' name, amen.