

Daily Devotions: Called to Belong

Welcome to the What On Earth Am I Here For Series. This week's devotions will be on, "Called to Belong."

Day One

You are created for His purpose. Everything we go through in life is for His purpose. It says in Rom 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them." If you were to hang out with some older people (I'm sure you guys are thinking that old people are those aged 20 and above), you'll see that this is true. They will tell you some stories. All the stuff that they went to, sometime bad, badder, baddest, have become things that have strengthened them. Sometimes they even become testimonies that help others. They have learnt something in these situations. Understanding this will change your focus from why is this happening to what do I need to learn so that I can become more like Christ.

"As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him and reflect His glory even more." 2 Corinthians 3: 18b

Question to consider: In what area of my life do I need to ask for the Spirit's power to be like Christ today?

Day Two

A tree. A large thing that has leaves, branches and roots. They don't just appear over night, do they? No. Those tall trees you pass every day when you go to school or work or the shop, are older than you. Older than your parents and maybe even your grandparents! My point is, growth is a process, an ongoing process. The same goes with spiritual growth. This process of spiritual growth will set you free. Based on God's word, this growth is measured by obedience not by how much we know. In order to grow spiritually, we must make a choice. We need to decide to deliberately follow Christ. So make a choice, God's way or your way?

"Let God transform you inwardly by a completely change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God - what is good and pleasing to him and is perfect." Romans 12:2b (TEV)

This verse becomes a bit clearer in the Message version.

"Do not be so well-adjusted to your culture that you fix into it without even thinking. Instead fix your attention on God. You will be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you, and quickly respond to it." Roman's 12:2a (MSG)

By culture, it means the way of doing things in the world around us.

Question to consider

What is one area where I need to stop thinking my way and start thinking Gos's way?

Day Three

Yesterday we were talking about how growth happens through transformation. But how does this transformation happen? It's through the Bible, the Word of God. It is the one thing God uses to help us grow. Spending time in the Word is important if you want the truth of the Word to transform you.

I once heard someone describe the Word as a mirror. Confused? I was too until he explained. Every morning when you wake up, you look in the mirror and see what you look like. Then as you begin to get ready for your day, you look at the image before you and start fixing what looks wrong. Girls, you know what I mean, The Word is the same for us. As we look to it, we see what we truly look like and we use it to fix ourselves until we look like Jesus.

John 8:31: "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed him, "if you abide in my Word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

So change your life by filling your mind with the Word of God.

Question to consider: What has God already told me in His word that I haven't started doing?

Day Four

Sometimes in life, things get tough. And I'm not talking about when you stump your big toe, or when you're having a bad day, or when your favourite team loses a game. I'm talking about when the people you love hurt you, when your dreams seem to be shattered, or when you lose someone close to you. In these times, sometimes we wonder if God is mad at us, that He is punishing us for some sin we committed, we wonder if He even sees us, or cares about us. If He is such a loving God, why do bad things happen? Why do we go through tough times?

What if I told you that God has a purpose for your troubles? That He uses them to direct, to inspect, to correct, to protect and to perfect you. He uses them to help you grow and become more like Christ. Some lessons in life are better learnt and remembered after going through the fire. But when you're there, He'll be right there with you. Go read Daniel 3: 19 - 30

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them," (Romans 8:28).

But in all this, know that He still loves you and He still sees you. He will never forget you. He said so.

"Yet Jerusalem says, "The Lord has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us."

"Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you! See I have written your name on the palms of my hands." (Isaiah 49: 14 - 15a)

Question to consider: What problem in my life has caused the greatest growth?

Day Five

Sometimes we are tempted by something. It happens. But what makes the difference is how we react. Temptation is not just an opportunity to do bad; it's also an opportunity to good. The choice you choose can make you better or it can make you bitter. The positive side of temptation is that you can turn it around and use it for God's glory, use it to build character and use it to become more like Christ. Every temptation is a stepping stone to maturity or a stumbling block to immaturity.

"God blesses the people who patiently endure testing. Afterwards they will receive the crown of life that God had promised those who love Him." (James 1: 12)

Question to consider: What Christlike character quality can I develop by defeating the most common temptation I face?

Day Six

Have you ever found yourself making the same mistake over and over again? You try your best but you still end up in the same situation again. It's tough, frustrating even. You begin to wonder if there's something wrong with you...

Do you need help to get unstuck and break the cycle of frustration? The first step to freedom from temptation is to tell someone you trust that you are struggling. Nothing good grows in the dark. Your temptation is not unique to you. We need each other - for it is within community that we grow. Defeating persistent temptation is possible. It's possible to change from the inside out. Because that's how God works.

"God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you cannot stand up against it. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you will not give into it." (1 Corinthians 10: 13b)

Question to consider: Who can I ask to be my spiritual partner that can help me defeat a persistent temptation by praying for me?

Day Seven

I'm sure at some point in your life, someone has told you to 'grow up'. This normally means that we move from thinking like children to thinking like adults. What does this mean for us Christians? God comes into our lives and begins the work of transform us. So look back on your journey with God and you will see how far you've come. Be encouraged by it. You may not be where you want to be but you are definitely not where you used to be. And that counts for something. Spiritual maturity takes time. Be patient with the process of growth.

"God began doing a good work in you, and I am sure He will continue it until it is finished when Jesus Christ comes again." (Philemon 1: 6)

Question to consider: In what area of my spiritual growth do I need to be more patient and persistent?