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**Chapter #1:**

**Understanding Your Purpose**

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

**First main point** : **Created for Kingdom Purpose** (Eph 2:10 NIV)

**Support A:** Created to Glorify Him (Hebrews 12:28-29 NIV)

**Example:** We glorify God when we praise Him

**Example**: We glorify God when we obey His Word

**Example :** We glorify God when we produce fruit

**Support B** : Created to Proclaim His Truth

**Example** : We proclaim His Truth when we share our faith

**Example**: We proclaim His Truth when we testify of who God is

**Example** : We proclaim His Truth when we testify of what God has done

**Support C**: Created to Rule the earth and serve His people

**Example**: We serve God by walking in our purpose and calling

**Example**: We serve others by using our gifts, talents, abilities and passions

**Second main point: God Will Bring Your Purpose Into Fruition** (Psalms 138:8 ESV)

**Support A**: God will help you discover your purpose through simply serving

 **Example:** Get involved, serve in your church, your community, on your job

 **Example:** “Purpose will find you….Serve the purpose” (Steven Furtick)

**Support B**: God will position you to discover your purpose

**Example:** God chose David when you

**Example:** God’s favor will help you discover your purpose by relocating you, allow you to be chose for a task, allowing you to be promoted, etc.

**Support C**: God will help you discover your purpose when you submit your heart, mind and will

**Example**: Give your whole heart to what God is establishing in your life

**Example**: Surrender your will to do His Will

**Third main point**: **Walking in Your Purpose** (2 Thess 1:11-12 NIV)

**Support A**: Walking in Your Purpose is connected to God

**Example:** God knows you better than you

 **Example**: You need to know who God is and what He means to you

**Example:** You need to know what God has done and is doing

**Support B**: Walking in Your Purpose is connected to your identity.

**Example:** You need to know you (abilities, interest, passions)

 **Example** : You need to know how God sees you (you have a destiny)

 **Example**: You need to know your heart

 Example: You need to know your life (experiences, crises)

**Support C**: Walking in Your Purpose is connected to your commitment to serve

 **Example**: You are being a servant to others when you are moving in your gifts

 **Example:** You need to know why we need to be committed to serve in God’s kingdom

**Example:** You need to know what it means to be committed to serve in God’s kingdom

 **Example**: You need to know the cost of commitment serving in God’s kingdom

**Chapter 1 : Conclusion** :

**Restate topic**: Understanding Your Purpose

God created you for his kingdom purpose. God is the only one who can fulfill His purpose in you. As His children, we are all called to glorify Him, rule over the earth, and serve Him by proclaiming His truths and serve His people by using our unique gifts, abilities, and talents to proclaim His truths. Your purpose is connected to knowing God, knowing yourself and being committed to serve.

**Chapter #2:**

**My Testimony:**

**How I found My Calling as a Minister, Leader and Teacher of Dance**

**First Main Point: I went from Passion and interest to kingdom purpose**

**Support A:** Knowing My Passion, My Interests, My Abilities

**Example**: I wanted to dance.

**Example:** I was drawn to the arts and wanted to play the piano, dance, sing,write songs and draw.

**Support B:** Putting my passion, interests and abilities into action.

**Example**: As a child, I joined the O’Quinn Royal Gladiators Drum and Bugle Corps where I learned to twirl a rifle and carry a flag.

 **Example:** At the age of 16, I paid for my first dance class.

**Example:** I participated in a summer youth talent show where I choreographed a dance for me and other youth to perform.

**Support C**: Using my passion, interests and abilities for kingdom purpose**.**

**Example**: My creative skills as a child continued as a young adult when I started choreographing dance pieces for ministry purpose

**Example:** As a child I taught a dance to other children and I continue to teach choreograph and biblical foundation about the ministry of dance

**Example:** As a child, I started using flags and rifles when I was involved in the O’Quinn Band and Bugle Corp and I started using ministry tools when I started ministering in dance including flags, streamers, tambourines, scarves, mattah sticks, etc.

**Second Main Point: I followed my heart.**

**Support A:** Pursuing my interests

**Example**: As a child I pursued the things that interest me (dance, modeling, singing, band and bugle corps).

**Example:** I paid for a dance class at Malcolm X College because I wanted to get into the performing arts for dance.

**Support B:** Pursuing my interests in college

**Example**: In college, I continued to dance and attended parties to dance, join a dance company and took dance classes

**Example:** I chose to stop attending house parties and to discontinue pledging a sorority

**Example:** I chose to receive Jesus Christ in my life

**Support C:** Pursing my choices after college

**Example**: I chose to join the church and get involve in the church including singing on the praise team

 **Example:** I chose to stop doing secular dancing

**Third Main Point: I followed God’s heart**

**Support A:** I accepted Jesus Christ into my life

**Example**: After watching someone’s life, I made the decision to give my life to the Lord

 **Example:** The willingness to give up secular dancing and parties

**Support B:** I accepted the calling to dance for God

**Example**: After accepting the call, I started a dance ministry at my church

 **Example:** Recruiting children, teens and adults to participate in dance ministries

**Support C:** I responded to God’s leading

**Example**: Following God’s leading to join another dance ministry and glean from others

 **Example:** Following God’s leading when choreographing dances

**Example:** Following God’s leading when providing biblical teaching on dance and when pouring into other

**Chapter 2: Conclusion**

**Restate topic**: My Story: How I found My Calling as a Minister, Leader and Teacher of Dance

The destiny that God had on my life was already being established during my childhood. God used the interests, passion and abilities that I had as a child to prepare me for His kingdom purpose. God was preparing me before I even knew Him. It was in my young adulthood that I came to know him and begin to serve Him as a leader, teacher and minister of the dance.

**A Prayer for Understanding Your Purpose**

**Chapter #3:**

**How to Thrive in Your Purpose**

**First main point** : **Stay Connected to God**

**Support A:** Draw Near to God.(James 4:8 NKJV)

**Example:** Spend time in God’s presence (prayer, meditation, reading scripture, praising, worshipping)

**Example:** Listen for God’s voice. You can hear God’s voice. (John 10:27-28 NIV)

**Support B:** Stay Connected to the Holy Spirit

**Example:** God will pour into you through the Holy Spirit (wisdom, revelation, power, etc.)

**Example:** God will continue to establish you through the Holy Spirit(withdirection, guidance, teaching you God ways, interceding for you, and helping you fulfill the Will of God)

**Example:** The Holy Spirit will empower you with boldness to speak and do, and perform special tasks

**Support C**: Stay Connected to God’s Word

**Example:** Grow in your biblical understanding of your purpose.

**Example:** Glean from biblical characters and situations that is related to your purpose.

**Example:** Stand on biblical principles

**Example:** Allow God’s word to be your inspiration and to keep you grounded.

**Second Main Point: Stay Connected to Your Purpose**

**Support A: Make Sure you are serving in the area where God called you**

 **Example:** Your serving should also gratify you

 **Example:** Your serving should be a blessing to others

**Support B:** Keep the Vision in Mind

**Example**: Ask God for a verse that would represent the vision of your purpose, your calling.

**Example**:**“**Then the Lord answered me and said: “Write the vision and make *it* plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.” (Habakkuk 2:2-3 NKJV)

**Support C:** Continue to develop your gift or skills**.**

**Example:** Take classes or read books to enhance your gift or skill

**Example:** Practice before Him to enhance your gift or skill

**Support D:** Glean and connect with others of kindred spirit and purpose.

**Example:** Pray and fellowship with others of kindred spirit

**Example:** Establish accountability partners or mentorship

**Example:** Build a unified community

**Third Main Point**: **Have a Kingdom Mindset**

**Support A:** Be Optimistic

**Example**: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” (Phil 4:8 NKJV)

**Example**:**“**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+19%3A14&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-14183a)]strength and my Redeemer.” (Psalms19:14 NKJV)

**Support B:** Maintain Emotional Stability

**Example:** Rejoice always

**Example:** Stay humble

**Example:** Give Thanks to God

**Support C:** Be Obedient

**Example:** Trust God at His Word (Numbers 23:19 ESV)

**Example:** Obey His Word

**Example:** When God nudges you to do something, act on it

**Chapter 3: Conclusion**

**Restate topic**: How to thrive In Your Purpose

If you are to thrive in our purpose, you must stay connected to God. God will give you eyes to see, ears to hear and the heart to receive from Him as you move in the purpose that He has called you to. You also must continue to stay connected to your purpose by keeping the vision in mind, developing your gifts and skills and building positive relationships. You also must maintain a kingdom mindset by being optimistic, obedient and emotionally stable.

**Chapter #4:**

**My Testimony:**

**How I Thrived in the Dance Ministry for 34 Years**

**First main point**: **My 34 years of ministering in dance was a faith journey**

**Support A:** I stayed prayerful and thankful

**Example:** I sought God in prayer about dancing for him

**Example:** I sought God in prayer on dance movements and what to wear when I dance

**Example:** I sought God in prayer about starting a dance ministry and what group of people to lead

**Support B:** I listened and obeyed God’s Voice

**Example:** God told me to start dancing as a solo dance minister

**Example:** God told me to start the dance ministry by leading children then adults, then teenagers

**Support C:** I submitted to God’s Will and saw how He established me in my purpose

**Example**: My Pastor to start a dance ministry.

**Example:** God directed me to the songs for the ministry

**Example:** God gave me a vision for every I choreography

**Second Main Point** : **God blessed and expanded my ministry of dance** (Proverbs 18:16 NKJV)

**Support A:** God expanded my relationships so that I could glean from others.

**Example:** My first authentic dance garment was given to me by someone I didn’t know.

**Example:** My voice teacher introduced me to someone who had an established dance ministry, Divine Expression, and she began to pour into me.

**Support B:** God expanded my outreach so that I could minister to more people.

**Example:** I was asked to become a part of the Divine Expression and I dance with DEM at different churches and events.

**Example:** I then took my first biblical dance class with DEM at Dorolyn Academy School of Music and was then asked to be one of the teachers after I completed the class.

**Example:** When Divine Expressions left,I became the director over the dance at Dorolyn Academy of Music

**Support C:** God expanded knowledge so that I could grow.

**Example:** Through Divine Expression Ministries, I learned more about the ministry of dance than I could have ever learn on my own.

**Example:** When God moved me own from DEM and Dorolyn Academy School of Music, I got involved with Eagles International Training Institutewhere I was challenged to go even deeper in my understanding of the ministry of dance.

**Third Main Point: I kept the vision before me and remembered how He had already blessed me**

**Support A:** I guarded God’s promises in my heart

**Example:** Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

**Example:** John 4:23-24 NIV

**Support B:** I remembered the many ways that God had already blessed the ministry

**Example:** Increase in number of those who joined the ministry

**Example:** Funds were provided for the ministry

**Example:** Requests were made to minister inside and outside of the church

**Support C:** God kept renewing me, the ministry and the vision.

**Example:** When I thought that my time of ministry was coming to an end, God would draw me to new songs, new people and new ideas for choreography

**Example:** The ministry expanded to using dance tools

**Example:** The ministry expanded to spontaneous dancing during praise and worship

**Chapter 4: Conclusion**

**Restate topic**: My Story: How I Thrived in the Ministry of Dance for 34 Years

I was able to thrive in dance ministry for 34 years because I walked by faith. Through my faith I was able to follow the leading of God for when it was time to start the ministry and expand the ministry. Through my faith, God blessed the ministry and open many doors for building relationships with other dance ministers ministering within and outside my church, teaching beyond the church walls and growing in my biblical knowledge and in my skill of dancing for the Lord.

**A Prayer for Thriving in Your Purpose**

**Chapter #5:**

**Face the Challenges, Resist Temptations But Don’t Stop Dancing**

**First Main Point: Let’s Look at the challenges and temptations that can hinder you from moving forward in your purpose**

**Support A:** People issues can hinder you

 **Example**: People can be critical and cause conflict, and treat you unfairly

 **Example**: People can be resistant and also be needed

**Support B:** Personal issues can hinder you

 **Example**: Insecurities of low confidence, fear of failure, being self-critical, etc.

 **Example:** Health issues

**Example:** Misconceptions about how you think people view you such as controlling, self-centered

**Support C:** Unexpected circumstances can hinder you

 **Example**: Lacking or Limited resources

 **Example**: Adjustment in time constraints

 **Support D:** Spiritual attacks can hinder you

 **Example:** Negative Thoughts

**Example:** Comparing yourself to others

**Second Main Point: Overcoming challenges and temptations that may arise**

**Support A:** Stand Firm

**Example:** 1 Corinthians 15:58 NIV – “Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

**Support B:** Be Content

**Example:**Don’t become overburdened by the resources you don’t have

**Support C:** Confront, Avoid and Resist

**Example:** Confront the Conflict and issues of people with the Word of God

 **Example:** Avoid Comparing people or yourself with people

**Example:** Resist Negative thoughts and other temptations by memorizing scripture

**Support D:** Pray, Pray, Pray

 **Example:** Spend time praying and meditating on God’s Word

 **Example:** Praise and Worshiping is another way to pray, rejoice and give thanks to God

 (<https://mintools-store.com/products/ministry-gods-way-discipleship-tool>

**Third Main Point: Why is Persevering so important?**

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5 NIV )

**Support A:** Perseverance is so important because it is for God’s sake. God created you and uses you to accomplish His purposes on this earth. If you stop serving His purposes will not be fulfilled.

 **Example:** You have to continue to honor and glorify Him

**Example:** You have to continue to spread the Gospel

 **Example:** To have to continue to serve God’s People

**Support B:** Perseverance is so important because it is for your sake. God wants you to grow in character becoming spiritually mature so that you are equipped to serve and be used by Him.

 **Example:** God wants you to be equip

 **Example:** God wants you to become whole

**Support C:** Perseverance is so important because you want to prevent the occurrence of ungodly responses.

**Example**: Loss of joy and hope, despair

 **Example:** hurt, anger, frustration

 **Example:** Stress, overwhelmed or drained

**Chapter 5 : Conclusion** :

**Restate topic**: Face the Challenges, Resist Temptations but Don’t Stop Dancing

No matter what obstacles arise, you must stay in the race and not give up on yourself, God or His purpose for your life. You will not fulfill your kingdom purpose or glorify God or grow in spiritual maturity, if you allow people and personal issues and other circumstance to cause you to give up on your god given purpose. You must persevere through the challenges, feelings and spiritual attacks.

**Chapter #6:**

**My Testimony:**

**Persevering Through Challenges and Temptations**

Hebrews 12:2 – “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (NIV)

**First Main Point: Challenges and temptations that were distractions for me**

**Support A:** Insecurities

**Example:** Dancers are typically 5’6 or shorter and I am 5’10. I also felt a little insecure about being taller than the other dancers and thinking that I would stand out every time we ministered.

**Example:** Initially, I aim for perfection and that made me very critical of the choreography I or someone else produced.

**Support B:** Spiritual Attacks

**Example:** When I first introduced fasting to the dance ministry, one member refused to participate. She was simply being rebellious.

**Example:** The enemy works through people to cause dissension. There was conflict in the ministry where individuals were jealous, competitive and prideful.

**Example:** On a few occasions, there would be problems with the sound system or a dancer would get sick or transportation issues right before we got ready to minister.

**Support C:** Health Issues and unexpected Circumstances

**Example:** Due to financial struggles, the church leadership cut the dance ministry from the budget**.**

**Example:** One year, I was out of commission for about 4 months because I had to have knee surgery. I thought that I would not be able to dance for the Lord anymore.

**Example:** Another year, I was diagnosed with an early stage of cancer on my gum called adenoid cystic carcinoma. I have to have radiation treatment and did not dance for about 6 to 8 months. Once again, I was questioning if my ministry of dance was done.

**Second Main Point: Overcoming my challenges and temptations**

**Support A:** Fixing my eyes on Jesus

**Example:** My height was no longer a problem when I learned from God’s word that God man looks at the outer appearance, but God looks at the heart. My focus changed to pleasing him with a heart of worship.

**Example:** I did not allow my health conditions to keep me in a defeated state. I prayed for healing and trusted God in the process. God did heal me and enabled me to continue to dance for Him years later.

**Support B**: Fixing my mind on Jesus.

**Example:** I change my perspective about my choreography and how I ran the ministry when I learned that God was not looking for perfection but a spirit of excellence. This entailed being prepared by having times of devotion, prayer, teaching, sanctification, consecration and practice.

**Example:** God had to renew my mind because I had the wrong thoughts. I couldn’t understand why the church couldn’t just lower the budget versus cut the budget. I just didn’t want to believe that some funding was not possible. God showed me that I needed to trust the decision of the church leaders, so I did. God eventually enable me to use some of my own funds as well as do a fund raiser for the dance ministry.

**Support C:** Fixing my heart on Jesus

Example: As a high school teacher who was dealing with over 100 teenagers a day, I did not want to deal with rebellious, jealous, competitive and complaining adult dancers. God showed me that I couldn’t walk away from the ministry, but I needed to have patience, forgiveness, forbearance and grace. What God gives to me, I needed to give to them. I needed to pray with them, and confront conflicts and teach then about being unified in the spirit and about the expectation of the ministry and their roles as ministers of dance.

**Third Main Point: I found my victory in Jesus**

**Support A:** Jesus persevered to save me and you

**Example:** Jesus knows hardships because he was crucified and suffered for me so that you and I could be redeemed from my sins and be restored to a relationship with our father and have eternal life. Jesus persevered, dies, and was resurrected. Jesus conquered death. Jesus restored our relationship with the Father. Jesus enabled us to have eternal life. If Jesus did all that because of His love for the Father, I can persevere over the hardships that were not as traumatic as His.

**Example:** Because Jesus was victorious, I was able to be victorious over my hardships.

**Support B:** Jesus is the mediator between you and God

**Example:** Jesus is my help. The means by which I can call out to God for the strength and wisdom to persevere, As I look to the Father, the Father is looking to me through the lens of His Son who died for me and I am reaching out to the Father in the name of His Son who paid the price of death for my and your sin.

**Support C:** Jesus intercedes for me and you so we are not alone in our perseverance. (Romans 8:34 NKJV)

**Example:** Jesus was sitting at the right hand of the throne of God when I was experiencing my hardships and he made petitions on behalf.

**Chapter 6 : Conclusion**

**Restate topic**: My Story: Persevering Through Challenges and Temptations

Just like you have experience challenges and temptation that have tried to hinder you in fulfilling God’s purpose in your life, I have experience challenges and temptations in the ministry of dance. What has helped me to stay the course is keeping my eyes, my mind and my heart fixed on Jesus. Jesus is where I and you will find the strength and the victory to overcome every obstacle.

**Prayer for Overcoming Challenges and Temptations**

**Conclusion**

**“…for the joy set before you..”**

**First Main Point: Embracing your purpose with Joy** (James 1:2-4 NIV)

**Second Point: “Well Done Good and Faithful Servant”**

2 Tim 4:7 –**“**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (NIV)

Matthew 25:21 – “His lord said to him, ‘Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ “ (NKJV)

**Prayer to Embrace Your Purpose with Joy**

**Introduction**

Imagine a life that consisted of a weekly routine of working from 8am to 4pm, Monday through Fridays during the day and cooking and exercising in the evening then cleaning the house, doing laundry and running errands on Saturday followed by attending church, eating out and a movie on Sunday. After doing this week after week, month after month, year after year, I think you would desire more, and you should. That longing for more is rooted in how God has created us. You were never put on this earth just to be spectators or just participators but rather life changers. God has created all of us for His purpose. God has given you unique talents, gifts and abilities for your pleasure but also to glorify Him and to serve His people, in essence to serve in His kingdom. Believe it or not, you were created to rule the earth within the capacity by which God wants to use you.

 There are some questions that you need to consider. Do you know your purpose? Are you walking in your purpose? Do you know what gifts, talents and abilities that God birthed in you? Some of you may know your purpose but may have walked away from your purpose. Some of you may know your gifts, talents and abilities but are not using them. Whatever your case may be, I want to tell you that your purpose is much greater than you. Your gifts, talents and abilities go beyond your pleasures and desires. God has a greater plan for your life than what you could ever think or imagine.

 Consider the movie, “Never Give Up” which is based on a true story about a professional deaf tennis player, Brad Minns. At the age of three, Brad was diagnosed with 80 to 90 percent loss of hearing after experiencing a very high fever. Who would have ever thought that Brad, at the age of 20, would become the number one deaf tennis player in the nation after winning the 1985 Men’s Single Tennis Finals for the deaf. The odds of Brad winning was definitely against him. Who would think that Brad would be able to hold the title of number one deaf tennis player in the nation for five consecutive years. Well, God made it possible for Brad to win because Brad was a young man who trusted God. God made it possible because He wanted to show the world that He could do what seemed impossible when someone believes. God had enabled Brad to become a a very skilled tennis player. Despite the challenges and the rejection that Brad experience from childhood to adulthood, Brad never gave up on what God had gifted him to do. Today, God is still using Brad as he serves as a tennis professional and personal trainer helping others to achieve their dreams. Brad also shares his testimony with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes group about living his life for Christ.

(“Meet Brad”, <https://bradminns.com>)

 This endearing movie about Brad Minns’ life was a great reminder of overcoming obstacles, staying focus on your dreams, believing God for the impossible, believing in yourself, the value of community and persevering through tough situations. No matter what you experience, you can’t quit or give up because God has a purpose for your life.

 The title of this book is “Don’t Stop Dancing, Just Change Partners”. Don’t allow your circumstances to stagnate you because the only partner you need to hold on to is God. Too many people are no longer vested in their purpose because they have been hindered in moving forward because of church hurt or other reasons. They have allowed the enemy to infiltrate their heart and minds with negative thoughts and feelings of inhibition or complacency. They abstain from getting involved because they do not want to get hurt again or repeat a cycle that was not a good experience for them. No longer do they feel committed or feel they have a purpose in the church or life. They have lost the motivation, the confidence, the zeal to serve and the sensitivity to hear from God. They have become one of those individuals that is living a routine life cycle without purpose.

 It is easier to quit than to weather the storms. It is easier to become complacent than to challenge yourself. It is easier to lean into your own insecurities than to lean into God. It is easier to believe in the lies that you hear and see around you, than to walk in faith. No matter how easy it may seem, you must pick yourself up and keep moving forward.

 In my book, I take you on a journey starting with understanding how to embrace your purpose to learning what it takes to thrive in your purpose and to persevere through the challenges and temptation that can prevent you from seeing the vision, setting the goals and living the abundant life that God has appointed for you. In my book, I want to encourage you that God has the blessings of joy and victory in store for those who persevere. Don’t you one day want to hear the Lord say, “well done, good and faithful servant”?

 There is much to do, much to learn and much to experience in God’s kingdom. May this book serve as a source of inspiration to let you know that God has a plan for your life. God sees you. God knows you. God has created you with a purpose. You are significant. Your desires are important to God. What you do is important to God. God wants to use you in the kingdom. May you find your purpose. May you use your gifts and abilities. My you thrive as you serve in God’s kingdom. This book will help you determine if you are on the path that God wants you to be on. Please

 A question that you may want to consider is the following: Do you really want to be used by God? When you come to know your purpose and begin to walk in your purpose, then can this question be answered. Then can the power of God work through you. If you don’t walk in your purpose, you will never reach the destiny God has for you. Giving up, quitting, or never beginning, should never be options for you. There are many examples of characters in the Bible who faced obstacles but did not give up in fulfilling God’s purpose. May their examples as well as my own testimony, remind you that that God have given you everything you need to persevere through difficult times.

 As I share personal testimonies in this book including how I found my calling in serving as a minister of dance for 34 years, may you be blessed. I will also talk about some of the challenges I face in the ministry of dance and what it took for me to overcome the challenges and thrive in the ministry for 34 years. As you read my book, I hope that you receive a word from the Lord that enlightens you with new hope in this season of your life. The kingdom of God needs you. Let’s make sure we are on the path that will enable us to become what God wants us to become so we can impact our life as well as the lives of others. May this book help you to find His Will for you.

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**Chapter #1**

**Understanding Your Purpose**

**For I know the plans I have for you,”** declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29: 11 NIV)

 What desires and interest has God placed in you? What brings you pleasure? What do you enjoy doing? What did you do for fun as a child, and it kept you so engaged that you found yourself doing it frequently? What is it that you have found great enjoyment in doing and you have become skillful at it, or you are interested in becoming skillful at it? What is it that you do because you feel the need to do it? Whatever that thing is, it is connected to your purpose. God has created us all with purpose.

 When I started dancing for the Lord, I had no idea that God was going to use me to lead a dance ministry. I never knew that I would one day lead the dance ministry at my church with children, then lead the dance ministry with adults and eventually lead the ministry with teenagers. I never knew that I would be teaching dance and spiritually pouring into the lives of others. I never knew but God knew**.** In fact, all my interest that I had as a child, was now being used for God’s purpose. I was not only leading the dance ministry, but I was also singing praise and worship with an ensemble and writing praise and worship songs during my spare time. Ephesians 2:10 says, **“**For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (NIV)

 God is not partial, when it comes to people. He wants to use everyone, but we must find our purpose. If we don’t see our purpose, then we must be alert as to how God is moving in our lives. We must be in tuned for when God brings our purpose into full fruition. Nothing that happens in our lives is coincidental. Everything happens for a reason. “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Rom 8:28 NIV)

I was called to the ministry of dance. Some of you may be called to ushering or operating the sound system in your church or doing the church announcements or preaching or even writing a book. Some of you may even be called to ministries outside the church such as the prison ministry, or providing home care for the sick or ministry through your job or serving as a missionary in another country. What is it that God has prepared or is preparing you to do? Matt 7:7-8 says, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (NIV)

**(to be continued)**

**Chapter #2**

**My Testimony:**

**How I found My Calling as a Minister, Leader and Teacher of Dance**

***“I wanted to be like Debbie Allen because dance was my passion.”***

Who would have ever thought that God would or could use me as a dance minister. As a child, I had no clue that I would one day be dancing for the Lord. All I knew was that I wanted to dance. Dancing for me was a joy. In addition to secular dancing, I wanted to pursue all genres of dancing. I wanted to be like Debbie Allen because dance was my passion.

 Growing up in a single-family home with my mom and my two brothers and my two sisters, I knew that my mom could not afford to spend money to fulfill my dreams or interests. If I was going to pursue any of my dreams or interests, I would need to make it happen. I wanted to play the piano. I wanted to attend modeling school. I wanted to sing and write songs. Most of all, I wanted to dance. I loved secular dancing, and I was very good at it. However, I wanted more than that. I also wanted to pursue dance in the performing arts.

 At the age of 16, I was able to pay for my first dance class after working a summer job. I took a ballet class at Malcolm X College with an African American male instructor. That male instructor was so challenging and intimidating that I quit the class. I then began to question my abilities. Do I really know how to dance? Why couldn’t I keep up in doing the movements in his class? Raised on the west side of Chicago, and with limited exposure, I had no experience with the performing arts, other than what I saw on tv. I thought I could be like Debbie Allen, but I came to realize that dance in the performing arts was not easy. There was a lot more that was demanded of me than I knew about or could grasp. I did not know or understand the ballet terminology including how to do jetes or ton’dues. I didn’t know that a dance rehearsal or class could be so intense. I was not prepared to get down like that. In my discouragement, I walked away from dancing in the performing arts. However, I did continue to dance the way I knew how and that is secular dancing to secular music. Sometimes I found myself dancing all night long when I attended house parties. I also participated in summer youth programs where I was able to participate in a talent show and choreograph a dance for me and other youth to display in the talent show. Along with that, I also joined O’ Quinn Royal Gladiators Drum and Bugle Corps. Through this organization, I was able to participate in parades where I either twirled a rifle or carried a flag.

 During my childhood, I did not know why I was drawn to dance, music, singing or writing songs or the drum and bugle corps but I did know that I had to do it. Doing these things made me feel complete. This is what I gravitated to for enjoyment. It made me feel like I was moving towards my destiny.

 After graduating from high school, I attended the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. I decided to give another shot at performing arts so I took dance classes which included ballet, jazz, and modern dance every semester. Even though I was not a dance major, I felt a need to continue to pursue my interest in dancing. I also joined a dance company called the Omnimov Dance company which was an African dance company. And, of course, I continued with secular dancing at the college parties. In fact, I became popular among the black students on campus because of my dancing abilities at the house parties. On the other hand, my dean couldn’t tell from my college transcript if I was an engineering major or a dance major. All he knew was that I really enjoyed dancing, and he encouraged me to continue to do it as an outlet from my studies.

 ***“I receive Jesus Christ into my life and my life began to transform.”***

 As college started becoming more challenging for me, I started backing away from the party life. At some point in my Sophomore year, I had to focus on getting a job to help pay for my tuition. I signed up for the work study program where they help you find a job on campus. I was assigned a job working in the cafeteria of my dorm as a server for the breakfast shift. As students went through the breakfast line in the morning, I would serve the food that they were not allowed to get themselves.

 There was one student who caught my attention every morning as he went through the food line. He was not your typical college student. Every day I saw college students that were grumpy, half sleepy and speechless when they went through the food line in the morning, but this student was always pleasant, smiling, and saying, “Good Morning” every single day. I couldn’t understand why this student was always happy. There weren’t any other students that had a countenance like his that came through the food line or sat in any of my classes. Coming from the west side of Chicago, I was not used to seeing people so nice and happy as he was.

 One day I decided to ask this student who I learned was named Micheal, why he was always so happy. Michael told me that he had received Jesus Christ into his life and if I was interested, he could have a female student share more details about what that meant.

 Even though I found pleasure in dancing, I was searching for more. I knew of God but I did not know how to connect with God. I once got baptize at the age of 14 at the Baptist church across the street from my house and I thought something magical was going to happen but it didn’t. Now I see someone that has something I want which I couldn’t quite explain what it was. Because I wanted what Michael had, I took Michael up on his offer of meeting with the female student. Through that female student, I came to accept Jesus Christ into my life. From that point on, my life began to transform. I was no longer investing time in attending parties or trying to pledge a sorority. My family wanted be to pledge Zeta but I was more interested in pledging Alpha Kappa Alpha. Nonetheless, I started attending a Bible study and focusing more of my time on my studies so I could graduate. In any regard, I did continue to take dance classes.

 When I graduated from college I returned to Chicago and through a friend I learned about a church called Rock of Our Salvation Evangelical Free church located on the west side of Chicago. I decided to join Rock church and became highly involved in seeking God and serving. I was singing on the praise and worship team, helping with the children’s choir, participating in singles ministry and attending church events and bible study. As my faith grew, I began to question the dance. I was no longer sure if dancing was pleasing to God. I became convinced that dancing was wrong. I decided that I needed to give up dancing if I was going to live for God. I approached my worship leader with my concern about the dance. My worship leader said to me, “My sister, you don’t have to stop dancing, you just need to change partners”.

***“God did not want me to give up the dance but to begin to dance for Him”***

 I was in awe of what my worship leader’s response. It really resonated in my spirit. I continue to reflect on the idea that I needed to change partners and reflect on the idea that I could continue to dance. At some point, I was convinced that God did not want me to give up the dance but to begin to dance for Him. I had no idea of how it would look or what it meant for me, but I felt a calling to dance for God.

 That experience catapulted my interest in dancing for the Lord and I begin to seek God on how to use what was my passion to use for His glory. This journey has not just given me purpose in God’s kingdom, but it has helped me to learn who God is and how God sees me. It has been a time of seeking God and developing a relationship with Him. It has been a time of learning to trust him, to walk in faith and to surrender to Him as I ministered through the platform of dance. God used the ministry of dance to draw me to Himself and this has been a spiritual experience with Him that goes beyond what I could ever imagine. As God has worked through me through the ministry of dance, I began to pour into others. The dance ministry team was being used by Him to impact the church with messages from the songs and movements to express His love, His power, His hope and His salvation. As I was finding my place in ministry, I also found my identity as a person. I was learning of my spiritual gifts of creativity, administration, teaching, compassion, encouragement and so on. I was learning how to hear God’s voice when it came to choreography songs.

 The point that I am making here is that God created me with a desire and ability to dance. He created in me those things that would bring joy to me and to Him and that He would use to mold my character. Do you know that what God has done in my life through serving in the ministry of dance, He also wants to do the same for you? Just like I found my purpose you can find yours too. You don’t have to go searching beyond what God already created inside of you. Your desires, your interests and your passion is what God had given you to connect to your purpose. You may not be a dance minister, but God has a calling for you. God wants to work in and through you in ways you cannot imagine but only experience when you serve Him in ministry. Recall that David, in the bible, played the harp as a boy. He didn’t know that one day God would use him to play the harp for Saul. He didn’t know that God was preparing him for a warfare ministry. He didn’t know that his playing would bring Saul deliverance.

 It was once said by a guest speaker on Moody Bible Institute radio station that “Christianity works best when it is an action”. God has not just called us to just be known as a Christian but to serve in the kingdom. **James 2:14-26** says, **“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**

**(to be continued)**

**Chapter#6**

**My Testimony:**

**Persevering Through Challenges and Temptations**

Hebrews 12:2 – “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (NIV)

 Even through God’s provisions and how He was continuing to guide and bless me through the many years of ministering through the dance, there has been times where I have taken a sabbatical and even felt like quitting. During those times, I was reminded that God was with me. I also remember the covenant that I establish with God after I was once told by my worship leader, ‘Don’t stop dancing, just change partners. So, through the years, through the hurts, through the insecurities, through the aging, through the spiritual attacks, through the loneliness, and through health issues and other challenges, I stayed in the race. As a result, God has taken me from glory to glory through the platform of dance ministry.

**(to be continued)**

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**Bible Versions**

* King James Version – KJV
* English Standard Version – ESV
* New International Version - NIV
* New King James Version – NKJV