***Don’t Stop Dancing***

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**Chapter #1**

 **Why did You Create Me?**

**First main point** : **God Created All Things to Glorify Him**

**Isa 43:7 –** “everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

 **Support A: We Glorify God When We Praise Him**

The word glory means “heavy in weight” It is the weighty importance and shining majesty that accompany God’s presence. The verb ‘glorify’ means “to give weight to” or “to honor”. Thus, to glorify God is to recognize God for who He really is and to respond appropriately. (<https://explorethebible.lifeway.com>)

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines ‘glorify’ as the act of bestowing honor, praise or admiration which will look very different with respect to each individual.

**Example:** “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Rev 4:11 NIV

**Example:** “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.”

Psalms 150:6 NIV

**Example:** “For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. Colossians 1:16 NIV

**Example:** “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” Psalms 139:13-14 NIV

**Example:** “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 10:31 NIV

 **Support B: We Glorify God When We Obey His Word**

**Example:** “But if anyone obeys his word, love for God[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202:5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30556a)] is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him:” 1 John 2:5

**Example: “**In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,” 1 John 5:3

**Example:** “but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you.” Jer 7:23 NIV

 **Support C: We Glorify God When We Produce Fruit**

This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15: 8 NIV

**Example:** Bearing Fruit by winning others to Christ:“To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 NIV

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**Example:** The Fruit that is made evident from the Holy Spirit working in us: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, **23**gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

**Example:** The Fruit of our good deeds: “so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God”

 Colossians 1:10 NIV

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matt 5:16 NIV

**Second Point: God created Us Because He Wanted Us**

**Support A: He Loves Us**

**Example: “**And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.” 1 John 4:16 NIV

**Example: “**See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.” 1 John 3:1

**Support B: He Wants Us to Love Him**

**Example:** “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Deuteronomy 6:5 NIV

**Example: “**Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” Jonh 14:21 NIV

**Support C: He Wants Us to Show Love to Others**

**Example:** “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7

**Example: “**We love because he first loved us.” 1 John 4:19

**Third Point: God Created Us for Kingdom Purpose**

“Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. **10**See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Jeremiah 1:9-10 NIV

**Support A: To Proclaim His Truth for Kingdom Purpose**

**Example:** Definition of Kingdom of God- The Kingdom of God is the realm where [God](https://www.learnreligions.com/god-the-father-701152) reigns supreme, and Jesus Christ is King. In this kingdom, God’s authority is recognized, and his will is obeyed. (learnedreligions.com)

**Example:** We are to be sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others

**Example**: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,” Luke 4:18 NIV

**Example: “**For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.” Romans 1:16 NIV

**Example:“**Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” Colossians 3:16 NIV

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**Support B: To Use Our Gifts for His Kingdom Purpose**

“Gifts are all the things that God has already given us. All the things that God has already done for us. All the ways that God has already made for us.” (Steve Furtick)

**Example:** Definition of a gift – “A gift is a power of ability bestowed naturally or supernaturally for the purpose of serving God”

**Example: “**Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10 NIV

**Example**: Proverbs 18:16 NIV – “A man’s gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men”

**Example**: 1 Cor 12:11 NIV - “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

**Example**: Ephesians 3:20 NIV - “**20**Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,”

**Support C: To Walk in Our Purpose for Kingdom Purpose**

Definition of Purpose.Purpose is defined asthe reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists.

**Example:** Ephesians 2:0 NIV-  **“**For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

**Example**: God created us to serve (help) others and to glorify Him.

Matthew 28:19 NIV – “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

**Support D**: **To walk in Our Calling for Kingdom Purpose**

Definition of Calling- Greek word is “Klesis” – “a call to something like a vocation or an invitation”. Also defined as “God’s initiative to bring people to Christ and to participate in his redemptive work in the world”

**Example**: Romans 1:1 NIV – “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.”

**Example:** Eph 4:10-12 10 NIV – “He who descended is the very One who ascended above all the heavens, in order to fill all things. 11 And it was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ”

**Example**: God called me to the ministry of dance by using someone to tell me that I could dance for the Lord.

**Example:** God calls us through various means including people, dreams, visions and situations or circumstances

**Example:** John 10:27 NIV **-** “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me”

**Example:** Purpose is associated with our calling but not our calling

**Example:** Ephesians 1:11 NIV – “In him we were also chosen [or called] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will”

**Example:** “Our calling is the things God gives us to do in life in order to carry out our purpose” or how we will glorify Him. “It includes our occupation, or the work God calls us to do. It includes our service and ministry in the local church. It includes using our talents and abilities in whatever ways, and whenever God chooses.

**Example:** “Calling is not an end, it is a means to an end. That end is glorifying God which is our purpose” (Purpose vs. Calling, Servants University)

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**Chapter 1 : Conclusion**

 God in his infinite power and wisdom chose to create man with gifts, talents and abilities for the purpose of glorifying Him and to fulfilling His kingdom purposes here on earth.

**A. Restate topic** : “Why Did You create Me?”

**B. Summarize three main points**: God created us because it was His choice and for the purpose of glorifying Him and for kingdom purposes.

**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together**: God has created us and wants us to glorify Him by doing His Will and walking in our purpose and calling.

**Chapter #2**

 **How I Found My Kingdom Purpose**

**Main Point: I Knew My Passion, My Interests and My Abilities**

**Example :** As a child, I wanted to play the piano, dance, sing and write songs and draw.

**Example** : “For me, dancing was a joy.”

 **Second Point**: **Dare to Dream and Follow Your Heart**

 **Example:** I wanted to be like Debbie Allen

 **Example:** I continue to pursue dance in college along with my other studies

 **Third Point: God Transform Me**

**Example:** When I received Jesus Christ into my life, I considered ceasing the dancing because it did not feel appropriate to me anymore.

**Example:** A ministry leader told me, “don’t stop dancing, just change partners”.

**Example:** I started dancing for the Lord and eventually became the founder and director of the dance ministry at my church.

**Chapter 2 : Conclusion**

 I found my kingdom purpose when I tap into the things that interested me as a child. I followed my heart and continued to pursue dancing but changing partners where I started dancing for the Lord and no longer for the world.

**A. Restate topic**: I Found My Kingdom Purpose

**B. Summarize three main points**: Dancing was my joy as a child and I continued to pursue dancing in college where I was introduce to a new dance partner. I started dancing for the Lord and leading a dance ministry when I received Jesus Christ into my life.

**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together**: God had a kingdom purpose for me that I began when I was a child but came into fruition when I was an adult and came to know Him as my Lord and Saviour.

**Chapter #3**

**“For I know the plans I have for you…”**

“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)

**Main Point: Knowing God**

We cannot fulfill the purpose that God has for us if we don’t know Him. Knowing God Is about developing a personal relationship where we are able to call Him our Father. It

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involves a committed life of obedience and communing with Him where we know His attributes and what He has has done and is doing and will do for us.

**Support A: Knowing Who God Is**

**Example:** Deut 7:9 NIV – “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,”

**Example:** Numbers 19:23 NIV “God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”

**Example: Phil 3:10 NIV – “**I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,”

**Support B: Knowing What God’s Word Says**

**Example:** God called Joshua to lead the Israelites after Moses died and commanded Joshua to follow the law that Moses had written down.

**Example:**

**Example:** John 14:21 NIV – “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

**Support C: Knowing How God Moves**

**Example:** Phil 2:13 13 NIV “for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

**Example:** There is a timeline on the plans God has for us. We do not want to be overlooked or miss out on God’s plans because we didn’t respond to Him right away.

Example: Isaiah 40:28-29 NIV – “…The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak….”

**Second Point: Knowing Who You Are**

**Support A: Knowing How God Sees You**

**Example:1 Peter 2:9 NIV – “**But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

**Example:** 1 John 2:2 NKJV – “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

**Support B: Knowing How You Should See Yourself**

**Example:** Psalms 139:14 NIV – “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

**Example:** John 10:27 NIV - My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

**Example:** 1 Corinthians 3:16 NIV – “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

**Support C:** Knowing the Gifts, Talents and Abilities That God Has Given You

**Example:** “God has made each of us with unique gifts, passions, talents, abilities, personalities and experiences that shape us and make us uniquely suited for our calling in life.” (Pastor Rick Warren classify our uniqueness using the acronym, **SHAPE** (**S**piritual gifts, **H**eart (passions), **A**bilities (talents), **P**ersonality, and **E**xperiences.)

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**Example:** James 1:17 NIV – “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

**Chapter #4:**

**How Will I Thrive In My Purpose, In My Calling, In My Ministry?**

**Main Point:** Stay Connected to the Right Sources

**Support A: Prioritize and Protect your Covenant Relationship with God**

**Example:** God will establish your purpose, your calling, your ministry

**Example:** God will birth in you new ideas, new directions, new methods:

**Example:** God will renew and restore

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

**Example:** The Holy Spirit is our source of wisdom, revelation, and power

**Example:** The Holy Spirit guides us, teaches us God ways, intercedes for us, and helps us fulfill the Will of God

**Example:** The Holy Spirit empowers us with the gifts and abilities to serve and empowers us to live for God

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

 **Example**: God gives your ideas and the abilities to be a visionary.

**Example**: Hab 2:2 -3 NIV – “And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

 **Support D: Grow Where You are Planted**

**Example:** Deepen your biblical knowledge and understanding about your purpose, your calling, your ministry

**Example:** Multiply by reproducing and building a community that consist of love, unity, accountability and support

**Chapter #4: Conclusion**

 If we are to thrive in our purpose, our calling, our ministry, we have to keep the vision in mind, stay connected to God and to the movement of His Holy Spirit, and desire to continue to grow as a community of believers and in our bibliblical understanding.

**A. Restate topic** : Stay connected to the Right Sources

**B. Summarize three main points –** Thriving in our purpose, our calling, our ministry is about prioritizing and protecting our relationship with God, by being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, keeping the vision and gro

wing in our in numbers and in our biblical understanding of our purpose, our calling , our ministry.

**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together**: The keep elements that will enable you to thrive in your purpose, your calling, your ministry is your relationship to God, being in tuned with the Holy Spirit and your vision, and continuing to grow in biblical knowledge and understanding and in numbers.

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**Chapter #5**

**Persevere in Your Purpose, Your Calling, Your Ministry ?**

**James 1:2-4 NIV – “**Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30269a)] whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

**Main Point: What is Perseverance?**

**Support A**: The word for perseverance in the New Testament Greek, hypomone, comes from the word “hupo” meaning under, and “meno” meaning to abide or remain.

**Support B**: Literal meaning of Perseverance is remaining under. Having that staying power – patient, endurance and steadfastness.

**Support C:** Perseverance means to thrive and not just survive. (<https://mintools.com/blog/ministry-perseverance.htm>)

**Second Point: Why is Perseverance So Important**

 **Support A:** To Honor and Glorify God

 **Support B:** To Fulfill God’s Purpose for the kingdom and for your life

 **Example:** Spread the Gospel

 **Example:** Minister and Serve

 **Support C:** Spiritual Growth and Character Development

 **Example:** Becoming spiritually mature

 **Example:** Becoming Complete

**Third Point**: **Overcoming Hardships**

 **Support A: What Hardships Do We Need to Overcome**

**Example:** People – Conflict with People, Needed People, Unfair Treatment, Resistance or Criticism

 **Example:** Spiritual- Spiritual Warfare

**Example:** Circumstances – Unexpected circumstances, time constraints,lacking resources

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

**Support B:Result of Hardships**

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

 **Example:** hurt, anger, frustration

 **Example:** Overwhelmed or drained

 **Example:** Pride

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

 **Support C: How Do You Persevere Through Hardships?**

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.”

**Example**: Spend Time with God Daily (Praising, Worshipping, Praying and Meditating on His Word) – John 15:5 NIV - “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.

 **Example**: Be content in where God has placed you

 **Example:** Confront Conflict and issues

 **Example:** Avoid Comparison and Negative thoughts

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**Chapter #5 - Conclusion**:

No matter what obstacles arise in your ministry, you must stay in the race and not quit.

 **A. Restate topic** : Persevere in Your Purpose, Your Calling, Your Ministry

**B. Summarize three main points**: We must persevere through the challenges, feelings and attacks that would entice us to quit the ministry by thriving and not just surviving. There are ways that we can overcome hardships and persevere.

**C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together**: God wants to fulfill his purpose in and through us and we cannot allow circumstances, the enemy and people be the reason that we stop ministering. There is a greater reward ahead.

**Chapter #6:**

**“…for the joy set before Him”**

Romans 12:11-12 NIV “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. **12**Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

**First Main Point: Stay Encourage in Our Purpose, Our Calling, Our Ministry**

**Support A: Have Zeal for the things of God**

**Example:** Get Excited about what is doing through you

**Example:** Get Excited when about growing

 **Example:** Get Excited about new members

 **Support B: Don’t Allow the Enemy to Your Joy**

 **Example:** Guard Your Heart

 **Example:** Protect Your Ears

 **Example:** Protect Your Eyes

**Support C: Anticipate Transformations**

 **Example:** God will birthing new ideas, bringing in new people

**Example:** Just Be and allow God to work – Be Open, Be Flexible, Be Teacheable, Be Resilient

**Second Point: Praise and Worship Should be Intricate Part of our Purpose, Our Calling, Our Ministry**

 **Support A: Praise God for His Provisions**

 **Support B: Praise God for what He is doing or has done or will do for you**

 **Support C: Praise God for what He is doing or has done or will do for others**

**Third Point: Testimonies Should be a Part of Our Purpose, Our Calling, Our Ministry**

 **Support A**: Testify to what God Has done for you.

 **Support B:** Testify to what God has done for others.

**Support C:** Let You Purpose, Your Calling, Your Ministry be the testimony of God’s power and goodness.

**Chapter 6 : Conclusion**:

 **A. Restate topic**:

 **B. Summarize three main points**:

 **C. Revisit introduction or tie all ideas together:**

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**Introduction**

 I recently saw the movie that was produced and directed by Rob Loos, called “Never Give Up”. What drew me to this movie is the fact that it was based on true events, it involved the game of tennis and it highlighted some of the aspects of what I was writing about in this book. In the movie, Brad Minns, at the age of 20, took the gold medal in 1985 in deaf tennis in what seemed like an impossible match to win. This was a man that was diagnosed at the age of 3 with 80 to 90 percent loss of hearing after experiencing a very high fever. This was a man that could talk normally but he could not hear.

 At age 7, the doctor recommended to Brad’s parents, that he be placed in an institution for the deaf. Instead of pursuing that route, Brad’s parents chose to purchase expensive high performing hearing aids for him. They also chose to teach Brad how to read people’s lips instead of learning sign language. At age 7, Brad was the only deaf kid in his classroom. He had to deal with the challenge of being teased and hit by paper balls by his classmates. He also experienced rejection by his teacher who felt that Brad should have been placed in an institution for the deaf. His teacher didn’t understand that Brad was being distracted by other students who were harassing him and felt that Brad could not focus and was giving her a hard time when the truth was that Brad could understand her when he was able to read her lip and when he was not distracted by his classmates harassing him.

 Brad’s mom was totally vested in protecting Brad and making sure Brad had a quality life and trusted God with his life. At the age of 6 or 7, Brad’s mom had Brad’s brother teach Brad how to play tennis. Initially, the game was difficult for Brad, and he wanted to quit. He struggled with hitting the ball and hearing the ball when it bounced on the ground or hit his racket. Brad’s brother encouraged Brad not to quit and told him not to be wimp. Brad eventually grasped the game of tennis and became a very good tennis player. In 1972, at the age of 14, Brad’s tennis coach did not initially want Brad to be on the tennis team because he was deaf and thought that he wouldn’t be able to play well. When Brad’s coach saw him play, he had a change of heart.

 Despite the challenges Brad encountered growing up, his parents were his biggest supporters and his mom encouraged him with the Word of God. Because Brad had

become so good at playing tennis, he was able to compete in the 1985 Men’s Singles Tennis Finals for the deaf. In deaf tennis, the game was played in silence. No one could use hearing aids.

 In the tennis match of Brad Minns versus Jeff Osborne, it seemed that there was no way that Brad could win. Osborne had already won 6 games to 4 in the 1st set, and 7 games to 5 in the 2nd set and just needed one more game in the 3rd set to win the championship. However, when Osborne was winning 5 games to love (zero) in the 3rd set, Brad turned his focus to God. Although his parents had not yet arrived to give Brad the support that he usually receives from them, Brad silently called out to God for help.

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miraculously, Brad’s game began to change. He was more energetic, more motivated, more confident and he started scoring points.

 Brad started making a big comeback at the end of the 3rd set winning the set with a score of 7 games to 6. The match continued for 5 hours before the winner of the best out of 5 sets could be determined. Brad ended up taking the championship, winning the 4th set with a score of 6 games to 3 and winning the 5th set with a score of 6 games to 4. On that day, Brad became the number one deaf tennis player in the nation in Men’s Singles Tennis for the deaf and he held that title for 5 consecutive years.

 This endearing story of Brad Minns’ life is 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. Life happens and pressures will come. Sometimes our circumstances will not always be positive. Sometimes, we may encounter people that are mean, judgmental, critical or lack compassion. Sometimes we may experience failure where some things don’t work in our favor. Sometimes we may experience rejection or fear or doubt our own abilities. No matter what we experience, we can’t quit. We can’t give up. As the title of the book so eloquently emphasizes, “Don’t Stop Dancing”. Don’t allow your circumstances to stagnate you. “Do not put a period where there should be a comma”.

 Too many people are inhibited from moving forward because of issues they have encountered. For example, some people have allowed church hurt to lead them to what the urban dictionary calls, “bedside Baptist church”. Bedside Baptist church is the church service that you engage in from home. Instead of physically attending a church service, you attend a church service via the internet or tv. You look for inspiration from the messages of preachers that you listen to and watch by way of media. Some people have become comfortable with bedside Baptist church because you can stay in bed, you can eat during the service, you don’t have to dress up and you don’t have to worry about being judged. Even though it may seem comfortable and safe for a season, there is a downside to bedside Baptist church. One of the downsides is that you are not walking in your purpose or using your gifts or talents for the kingdom. Where is the fellowship? How are you growing? How are you exhorted? Who are you exhorting?

 There are also some who do attend or visit church, but they are not vested because of church hurt or other reasons. They attend church as a spectator but not a participator. They have allowed the enemy to infiltrate their heart and minds with negative thoughts and feelings of inhibition or rebelliousness. They abstain from involvement 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. They have lost the motivation, the confidence, the zeal to serve and the sensitivity to hear from God. They have lost direction.

 There are others that are dutiful at church or at their job, but their heart is not in the right place. They are serving with the wrong motives and their focus is set on the wrong things. They are not focusing on pleasing God, or considering what God wants to do through them or for them but more concern about man’s approval. They are driven by

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the praise of others. They are overwhelmed, stressed or tired when they don’t meet the standards that man requires of them. They are conditioned by their routine lifestyle and not opened to really understand what God wants or what God is doing in their midst.

 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.

 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. A question that you may want to consider is the following: Do you really want to be used by God? When we come to know our purpose and begin to walk in our purpose, then can this question be answered. Then can the power of God work through you.

 If we don’t walk in our purpose, we will never reach the destiny God has for us. Giving up, quitting or never beginning, should never be an option. There are many examples of characters in the Bible who faced obstacles but did not give up in fulfilling God’s purpose. In my book, I talk about some of these characters and what it took for them to persevere through difficult times.

 Also, I share my personal experiences in serving in the ministry of dance for 34 years. I will talk about how I found purpose in the ministry of dance and share some of the challenges and what it took for me to endure 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. May God allow this book to be a blessing to you and inspire you to find and thrive in your purpose. 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 the lives of others. May this book help you to find His Will for your life.

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**Chapter #1:**

**Why Did You Create Me?**

**“**For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,

which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 2:10

**Chapter #2 – How I Found My Purpose**

“Don’t Stop Dancing, Just Change Partners”

 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. For me, dancing 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 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 Malcom 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 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 class could be so intense. I was not prepared to get down like that. In my discouragement, I walked away from the performing arts dancing but I kept secular dancing in my back pocket, so to speak. 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.

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 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 or to escape life’s situations.

 After graduating from high school, I attended the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. I decided to pursue the performing arts again taking 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 pursuing my interest in dancing. I also joined an African dance company called the Omnimov Dance company. I also continued secular dancing at college parties. 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 because majoring in Mechanical engineering at UIC was very challenging.

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

 At some point in college, I receive Jesus Christ into my life and my life began to change. I found that I was no longer investing time in attending parties or trying to pledge a sorority, instead, my focus was on graduating from college and learning about God. However, I did continue to take dance classes and to keep up with the secular dances.

 When I graduated from college I return to Chicago and through a friend I learned about a church called Rock of Our Salvation Evangelical Free church. I became highly involved in that church and in seeking God. 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”.

 I was in awe of what my worship leader had expressed to me. It really resonated in my spirit. I continue to reflect on the idea that I needed to change partners and 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 journey in dancing for the Lord and using what God had given me for my pleasure to do for His purpose. 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 developing a relationship with God where I learn to seek him,

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

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God has worked through me through the ministry of dance, I was able to pour into others and to be used by Him to impact the kingdom using movements to expression 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.

 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.

 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. 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.

 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? You may not be a dance minister, but God has a ministry for you. God wants to work in and through you in ways you cannot imagine but only experience when you serve Him in ministry. 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.**

**Chapter #3:**

**“For I know the plans I have for you…”**

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.

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 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. **Jeremiah 29: 11** says**, 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. (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 like 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)**