**TITLE & SUBTITLE**

**A Charge to Keep**

**How My Mother Nurtured Purpose with a Song**

**Other Possible Titles:**

**That’s My Song!**

**How My Mother Nurtured Purpose with a Song**

**Other Possible Titles:**

* **A Charge to Keep I Have**
* **We’ve Been Charged**
* **You’ve Been Charged**

**Other Possible Subtitles:**

* **The Song that Can Influence Purpose**
* **The Song that Defines Your Charge**
* **How My Mother Planted Purpose with a Song**
* **How a Song Influenced My Life**
* **The Song that Influenced My Destiny**
* **The Song My Mother Planted**
* **The Song that Influenced My Life**

**OUTLINE**

**Introduction: Planting Season**

**-**

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2. **Charged to Walk Worthy of Your Calling**
3. **Charged to Co-labor with God**
4. **Charged to Give Ourselves to the Work of the Lord**
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**Chapter 4: Charged for this Generation**

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**Chapter 7: Charged to do the Master’s Will**

1. **TBA**
2. **TBA**
3. **TBA**

**Chapter 8: Your Charge to Keep**

* **Worksheet**

**Chapter 9: In Honor and Loving Memory of Mother**

End of Outline

**A Charge to Keep!**

**How My Mother Nurtured Purpose with a Song**



**EARLYE JULIEN**

**DEDICATION**

First, I thank God for this wonderful opportunity to witness about His goodness.

Second, this book is dedicated in loving memory of my mother who planted, watered and nurtured this seed (and countless others) whose hard shell has finally erupted and pushed through the good soil in which she planted it.  I am forever grateful.

I also extend heartfelt gratitude to my childhood village, the Lanes Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Downsville, Louisiana.  I am a product of the often-quoted adage which proclaims, “It takes a village to raise a child!” Thanks to each and every one of you who are still in the land of the living and I honor those who have gone to be with the Lord for keeping their God-given charge which laid the foundation for me to ultimately discover and keep mine. May God forever shine His face upon you.

Finally, to my “Mighty Men of God,” my husband Pastor Angelo (AJ) and sons Wesley and Jacobe, thank you for your endless love and support.

**INTRODUCTION: Planting Season**



There are so many things my Mother used to do or say and so many things she taught me to do or say that I didn’t understand as a child. Sometimes when I was dumbfounded with bewilderment and it all just seemed too complicated to understand, Mother would respond to my confusion with these words, “Just keep living!” She knew that just living life is an amazing teacher and only in time would I come to understand some of the wisdom she tried to impart, some of the experiences she tried to expose me to and some of the words she made me learn and recite even if I had no understanding at the time. She knew in time those mysteries would be revealed.

The words to the hymn, “A Charge to Keep I Have” written by Charles Wesley was one such mystery for me. I had no idea what the words to that song meant, nor how deeply they would eventually resonate with me. With a royal blue felt tipped ink pen, my mother permanently penned the words to that song in the front cover of the Bible she had given me. She made me recite the words over and over.  Every time I picked up that Bible, which was almost daily, the words of that hymn were staring me in the face.  I had no idea at the time that Mother was multiplying the fruit from the harvest of her own life by transferring seedling to mine.  As a farmer strategically and diligently tills the ground to plant the seeds of an anticipated harvest to come, my mother planted the words of that song in my mind believing that one day my heart would reap a harvest.

More importantly, than staining the words in my Bible or inscribing the words in my mind, she reached deep down and planted the spirit of the song in my heart.  How did she do that? She taught me to sing the song and made me sing it over and over. Then, she made me take possession of the song. She told me, “This is ***your*** song!” Every time she would tell me to sing it, she would say, “Sing your song!” Unbeknownst to me, the words of that song were gripping the soil of my heart and gradually forming deep and wide roots to anchor themselves in place.

Now this wasn’t just any old simple song. Though it was a traditional hymn which has been published in numerous hymnals, it was often sung in Southern, African American Baptist Churches as a call and response song. Call and response songs are a unique way of getting your audience to participate and respond to you. The leader of the song says a phrase of the song and then the audience responds by repeating that phrase and/or the next one. So, Mother would make me lead and call out a phrase of the song and then she would respond. The sounds we made were painful to the ear, like the sound of children awkwardly making attempts to play instruments in a band for the very first time. We shrieked and croaked but she didn’t seem to care about that because the goal wasn’t the singing. She was planting!

I wasn’t exactly thrilled about this gift of being assigned my very own song. In fact, it became the source of much fear and frustration for me. One particular memory regarding this hymn is etched in my mind so vividly that if I close my eyes and allow my thoughts to transport me back to that particular place in time, I feel as if I’m actually reliving the moment all over again.

Mother proudly and firmly issued her command, “You will be singing your song for devotion at church next Sunday!” It was clear this was not a request and there was no alternative. Like a newly drafted soldier headed to war, I attempted to reason with my fear-cramped stomach. I told myself maybe it won’t be so bad. After all it’s a call and response song.  I reasoned it was sort of like being picked by the teacher to lead the Pledge of Allegiance in front of your classmates. You really only say a few of the words by yourself then everyone joins in. No one will dare tease me because one day it will be their turn. At least, that’s what I hoped.

Every night for an entire week before I went to bed Mother would come in my bedroom and say, “Sing your song!” We would bellow and croak, “A Charge to Keep I Have” with unmelodious tones until she was satisfied she had sufficiently watered and fertilized her seedling. Then she would stand watch as I got on my knees to say my prayers; her eyes closed and head tilted slightly upward as if basking in the warmth of God’s sunlight.

Finally, it was Sunday. I always looked forward to Youth Sunday! The second Sunday of every month was transformed from a regular church worship service to a boot camp training ground for every person in attendance under the age of 18. Envisioning their prized church of the *future*, the church leaders deemed it imperative to train the youth of *today*.  Every Youth Sunday, the youth were tasked with leading the various aspects of the Worship Service.  The youth would serve in every aspect of the order of service except the Message. They welcomed visitors, made the announcements about upcoming events, collected the tithes and offerings, served as ushers, choir members and led the devotional period which included a Scripture, Hymn and prayer.

The Order of Service which we referred to as the “program” was always printed out on paper and distributed by the ushers to the congregation along with an envelope for tithes and offerings.  As I waited for the devotional period, I held my program in my hand and watched it as if I was watching the second hand of a clock; each aspect of the program indicating time was quickly passing and I would soon be called upon to execute the orders of my commanding officer, “Sing Your Song!”

I wrung my sweaty hands together rhythmically as I rehearsed my song in my head. As I waited my turn and looked around the room into the faces of the people, sheer terror struck me as I feared the worst. Oh no! What if I’m so bad that when I call out my song no one responds?

I went from rehearsing my song in my head to repeating a prayer like a stuck song syndrome, “God please let them respond, God please let them respond, please let them respond, please let them respond, please let them respond!” The Mistress of Ceremony interrupted my pleas with an introduction, “Next, we will have our devotion. That was my cue. Very slowly I shuffled to the front of that little old Baptist church and stood in front of the communion table, being ever so careful not to touch that table by mistake. As children, we were taught tremendous reverence for the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper and all the things associated with it that I’m sure I feared being struck by lightning or at the very minimum, a spanking and a long scolding about how disrespectful it was to touch that table. So, I cautiously stood there looking at the people who were all looking back at me. I tugged downward at my little Sunday dress hoping it would hide my shaking knees. I could no longer hear the tune of my song in my head as it had been drowned out by the magnified sound of my racing heartbeat. I blinked frantically in an attempt to sooth my stinging eyes from the salty sweat that had begun to drip down my forehead and onto my lips which now tasted like the dense salt from saltine crackers.  I tried to swallow but fear drained the moisture from my mouth as if I had bitten into an unripe persimmon and I longed for a cool glass of iced water. My body had frozen stiffly in place. Only my eyes moved. As I slowly glanced left to right across the room, my eyes honed in on Mother. Without saying one word out of her mouth, her facial expression yelled, loudly, “Get a hold of yourself! You’d better get to singing your song!” My body suddenly broke out of its frozen pose, I closed my eyes tightly and just like we practiced, I bellowed out, “Aaaaaaaaa char-ar-arge,” “to-oo-oo kee-eep,” “I-I-I have.” Then, after what seemed like a long delay, the congregation responded in kind, reaffirming Mother’s efforts to nurture purpose with every single phrase.

***“A charge to keep I have*, a *God to glory***

***A never dying soul to save* *and fit it for the sky***

***To serve the present age*, m*y calling to fulfill***

***Oh, may it all my powers engage* t*o do my master’s will.”***

**CHAPTER 2: A Charge to Keep**

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**A Charge to Keep I Have**

1. **Charged? What is That?**
2. **Charged to Walk Worthy of Your Calling (Ephesians 4:1)**

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received (Ephesians 4:1 NIV).

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word, “worth” as “having worth or value.” As a child, I worked hard at trying to earn worth because I wanted to feel worthy of the acceptance of my friends, worthy of my parent’s love, worthy of my teachers’ praise and worthy of God’s blessings. It was a continuous uphill battle. While I wanted to always experience the thrill of victory, I often experienced the agony of defeat. Although I was a loyal friend, a loving daughter, a highly accomplished student both at school and in my Sunday School class at church, I struggled with *feeling* worthy.

That set me on a long and frustrating path of people-pleasing attempts, well into my early adult years. Failed attempts at people-pleasing was the source of much disappointment because it just couldn’t be done. It was an unrealistic goal. I could not please all the people all the time. Heck, most times I failed miserably at just trying to please Mother and trying to please some of the people some of the time and it made me feel afraid, insecure and unworthy. Now, that was in no way, Mother’s intention. Her intention was always to encourage me to excel and instill in me that I was capable of reaching the stars if I worked hard enough. I know that now, but back then, I felt pressured to perform to perfection and it seemed too often I fell short.

**INSERT MORE HERE**

One of my most precious possessions is my high school yearbook, only because of what my father wrote in it. He said that while he was certainly proud of my accomplishments, he loved me simply because I’m me. That day, I finally felt what worthy is supposed to feel like. It was the beginning of understanding that I at least, didn’t have to earn my father’s love. He just loved me because I’m his.

While there is a calling on our lives and while God is pleased when we walk worthy of that calling, His love for us is not dependent upon our performance. He loves us just because we are His.

**INSERT MORE HERE**

1. ***Charged to Co-laborer with God* (1 Corinthians 3:9)**

**9**For we are both God’s workers. And you are God’s field. You are God’s building (1 Corinthians 3:9 NLT)

1. ***Charged to Give Ourselves to the Work of the Lord* (1 Corinthians 15:58)**

**58**So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless (1 Corinthians 15:8 NLT)

1. ***Charged to Steward Over Our Gifts* (talents parable; Matthew 25:14–30)**

It is irrefutable that God has given every believer at least one spiritual gift. I Peter 4:10 (NKJV) states, ***“****As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”* So, you have received one or more gifts; but, have you ever feared your God-given gifts weren’t dynamic enough to be effective for the Kingdom? As you watch others seemingly flow effortlessly in their gifts that shine intensely and gloriously like bonfires ablaze, do yours appear to be a flickering spark in comparison? My dear friend, I can relate. For years, I was bound by feelings of insignificance that kept the gifts God bestowed upon me hidden, silent and at the mercy of other people’s approval.

The good news is that those long-engrained fears and feelings of insignificance were all lies introduced by Satan in his attempts to kill, steal and destroy the purpose, impact and effectiveness of my God-given gifts.

Satan wants that same demise for you too. But his weapons against you will not prosper because I have a charge; a command from God that I must keep and part of that charge is to reveal the truth about the purpose of your God-given gifts so the world can experience God’s grace through you. The truth is your gifts are unique and were specifically designed by God. The truth is your gifts are significant. The truth is God can do amazing things with your gifts according to the supernatural power that works in you. The truth is your gifts were given to you to glorify God. The truth is your gifts are necessary for such a time as this and you have a spiritual responsibility to minister to others as a good steward of the manifold grace of God.

You may be wondering, how I made the transition. How did I go from feeling like my gifts are insignificant to feeling honored for any opportunity to use all that God has given me for His glory? Well, it all started many years ago with a song. It is a song that explains how I have been charged by God to make a difference in this world. It explains that I must obey that charge, I must glorify God, I must serve others and I am empowered by God to fulfill that charge. I didn’t understand it then when I was first introduced to the song. It was not until years later after the Holy Spirit revealed to me what the words to that song meant that I was freed and released to fulfill God’s charge for my life.

Dear friend, as I share the revelation that I came to embrace regarding that song, it is my hope that you will be inspired just as I was. The world is waiting for your gifts to be released when you surrender and respond to the charge God has commanded you to keep.

**CHAPTER 3: Charged to Glorify God**

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**A God to Glorify**

1. ***Charged to Glorify God with a Transformed Life (Romans 12:2 NKJV)***

**2**And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1. ***Charged to Glorify God in Everything (1 Corinthians 10:31 & Colossians 1:16)***

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

Have you ever gone through whatever is a typical week for you, month or even a full year and at the end of that week, month or year felt empty or unaccomplished? At various seasons in my life, I have felt sort of like those display maps at the entrance of a shopping mall that shows, “*you are here*” and you realize that where you want to be is somewhere far over “*there*” and you’re not quite sure how to get there or even if you get there if you will find what you’re longing for.

Those are the seasons I have most struggled with purpose. Those are the seasons when I long to be like others who clearly seem to have been born to do a single, specific thing and they’re killing it! I can see clearly that a particular person was born to play the piano. Another one was born to teach children. Another person was born to play football and the glory that exudes from their lives has left me wondering what is the thing I was born to do? Or, what am I supposed to be doing in this season? Time after time I’ve asked myself that question and most every time, the Holy Spirit reminds me of Colossians 1:16 which states in the Message translation:

*“We look at this Son and see God’s original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels-everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him.”*

No matter what I do or what I set out to accomplish, whether related to family, church, work, school, community or otherwise, it should be initiated with a single purpose in mind. My purpose is to glorify God with my life. This, for me, establishes the foundation upon which everything in my life should be built and all my plans should be constructed.

Rick Warren’s book The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For? Regarding purpose, Rick stated in part:

*[Without purpose, life has no meaning. Without a clear purpose you have no foundation on which you base decisions, allocate your time and use your resources. You will tend to make choices based on circumstances, pressures and your mood at that moment. Knowing your purpose simplifies your life. It defines what you do and what you don’t do. Your purpose becomes the standard you use to evaluate which activities are essential and which aren’t. You simply ask, “Does this activity help me fulfill one of God’s purposes for my life?”] (Warren, 2008).*

**INSERT MORE HERE**

1. **Charged to Glorify God with Worship**
2. **Charged to Glorify God with Light**
3. **Charged to Glorify God with Much Fruit (John 15:1-2 NIV)**

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **2**He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john%2015%3A1-2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26702a)] so that it will be even more fruitful.

**CHAPTER 4: Charged for This Generation**

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**To Serve the Present Age**

1. **Charged for Such a Time as This**
2. **Charged to Use Your Voice**
3. **Charged to Make a Difference**

**CHAPTER 5: Charged to Fulfill the Calling**

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**My Calling to Fulfill**

1. **Charged to Love**
2. **Charged to Give**
3. **Charged to Help**
4. **Charged to Disciple/Teach (Luke 22:32)**

I once heard a colleague, Attorney Amber Wells say, “Christians are practitioners.”

**CHAPTER 6: Charged with Power**

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**Oh May It All My Powers Engage**

1. **Charged with Power to Witness**
2. **Charged with Power to be Bold and Courageous**

**Insert** story about my old pastor and all the superman paraphernalia that I learned about power from

1. **Insert** info about witnessing
2. **Charged with Power to Abound in Hope**
3. **Charged with Power to Speak Life**

**CHAPTER 7: Charged to do the Master’s Will**

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**To Do My Master’s Will**

**Insert – write about giving up my will for his will**

**CHAPTER 8: Your Charge to Keep**

The words of the song my mother taught me when I was just a little girl, demonstrate a commitment felt by a previous generation to know God themselves then tell the story to "the present age." We all have a charge to serve "this present age;” this present generation.

(Note to self: need to find the author of this story and cite it).

There’s a story of a little girl who was very close to her grandmother. Grandmother always took time to go to her room at bedtime, pull up the rocking chair and read her stories from an old storybook given to her by *her* mother, every night … without fail. After a while Grandmother got sick. Shortly after the little girl learned that grandma had gone to be with the Lord. The little girl became very concerned. Not about her grandmother because she understood that grandmother was with the Lord. The question that bothered her was, "Whose going tell the story?"

That night her mother came into her room and tucked her daughter in bed. And because she was tired from the day’s work, she sat in the old rocking chair. Instantly the little girl sat up in her bed and displayed the biggest smile. The mother asked her, “Why are you smiling so?”

The little girl pulled out the old storybook that had passed through three generations and put it in her mother's lap. She said, “You’re sitting in grandmother’s chair. So, ***you*** have to tell the story!"

The world is in need of a Savior, and the people of this present age want to know, “Who will tell the story?” We are all sitting in the seats of grandmothers and grandfathers past who have told the story of Jesus.

Each of us is charged to tell the story of the great things God has done in the past, what he is doing today and the greater things to come. And Greater can begin right now!

INSERT - worksheets

You have a charge to keep. Keep it.

You’ve been charged to glorify God. Glorify Him.

You’ve been charged to serve others. Serve them.

You’ve been charged for this generation. Serve them now.

You’ve been charged with power. Exercise it.

You’ve been charged to do the Master’s will. Do it.

**CHAPTER 9: In Honor and Loving Memory of Mother**



Mrs. Mary Gordon Meadors Adams

**Early Years**

Mary Gordon Meadors Adams was born September 8, 1923 in Junction

City, Arkansas to the late Gordon Welcome Meadors and Vata

Slaughter Meadors. Mary accepted Christ as her personal savior and

joined the church at an early age. Mary’s mother taught all her children

to sing and to play the fiddle, organ and piano. As a young girl, Mary

and her sisters toured Arkansas and Louisiana singing gospel music.

**Education**

Mary was passionate about education for herself and others. She

boarded with principal R.J. McDaniel and his family while attending

Elliott High School in Bernice, LA. She excelled in her studies and

participated in many extra curricula activities. The Elliott girls’

basketball team even won the Louisiana State Basketball Championship

while she was a member of the team.

Mary attended college at Southern University in Baton Rouge, LA where she met her husband, Oakland Boyce Adams. She graduated with

a major in Home Economics and accepted a job in Virginia as a Home

Demonstration Agent. Mary later attended the University of Southern California and Grambling State University where she earned a Masters’ Degree in Sports Administration.

**Marriage and Family**

Mary married Oakland Boyce Adams on January 5, 1946. She

affectionately called him, “Daddy” and he affectionately called her,

“Sweet.” They were happily married for 63 years before his death in

May 2009. To this union 4 children were born.

**Career**

Mary earned a certificate as a practical nurse and was also a licensed

beautician. She taught 7th grade at Lincoln High School, Home

Economics at Union Parish Training School, Physical Education and

Girls’ basketball at Eastside High School and Social Studies, Driver’s

Education and Physical Education at Farmerville High School.

**Christian Living**

Mary was a devout Christian and truly a virtuous woman. Mary and

Oakland attended church at Lanes Chapel Baptist Church in Downsville,

LA. Mary loved God and His Word and was a gifted teacher. She was

passionate about Christian education and loved teaching children and

youth. Not only did Mary teach her own children about the Bible and

Jesus’ amazing love for us, but she reached out to other children in the

community and would teach them and take them to church along with

her family. She taught Sunday School, Baptist Training Union (BTU),

Sunshine Band, Red Circle and other educational arms of the church.

She served as a Deaconess and was a member of the Mission Board and

Mother’s Board. She was active in the 3 rd District Sunday School

Institute, served as Vice President of the Women’s Department of the

Liberty Hill Baptist Association and always attended the State Baptist

Convention, the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education and

the National Baptist Convention where she made sure that her children

participated in the Christian youth programs. Even at age 96, when her

health allowed, Mary still attended church services at Mt. Nebo and

would sometimes attend services at St. James in Sterlington, LA.

Community

Mary loved people and was extremely generous. She would make

quilts, jelly, preserves and bake fruit cakes and donate them all freely to

anyone who requested. She was also a great entertainer and loved to

cook and serve groups of family and friends. The highlight at many

gatherings would be her entertaining with one of her many stories,

poems or even “raps” which were often requested. She would receive

special requests from athletes, cheerleaders and fans to lead the crowd

in her signature “WHAT?” cheer at many sporting events. She also

wrote the school song for Eastside High School.

Mary had a special ability for bringing out the best in young people.

She would point out special gifts and talents that they had not seen in

themselves and encourage them to strive for success and excellence in

anything they attempted to do. She enjoyed teaching children how to

cook and sew and was a great public speaking coach. She taught young

people how to “enunciate” the English language with assertion and

conviction often using poetry and short speeches as a means to teach

and build their self-confidence. She was a stickler for proper etiquette

and hygiene and was never too busy to spend time teaching young

women to present themselves as ladies.

She was a member of the following Civic, Social and Educational

Organizations: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (Lifetime member), Order of

Eastern Star, Southern University Alumni Association, Louisiana

Education Association and Foster and Adoptive Parents Association.

Mary retired from teaching in 1980, but continued to devote her time

to her family, church and community. She and Oakland delivered the

“Meals on Wheels” for senior citizens for Downsville, LA for 20 years.

After retiring from public school teaching, Mary and Oakland also

became the adoptive parents of three young children.

**Her Departure**

She departed this life on Friday, November 22, 2019 at 9:30 a.m.

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Mother and Daughter singing holding hair brushes

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African American Woman’s hands planting a seedling

[African American Planting Trees Images](https://stock.adobe.com/search?k=african+american+planting+trees)

Clipart of little girl holding mic and singing

[1,208 Young Black Girl Musician Cartoon Images, Stock Photos, 3D objects, & Vectors | ShutterstockVisit](https://www.shutterstock.com/search/young-black-girl-musician-cartoon)

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Below is just miscellaneous writing to possibly include somewhere or maybe not. Sometimes I was just writing without thinking about it.

Whenever, I got in trouble for doing something I shouldn’t have or for failing to do something I should, after Mother scolded me, she would always make me read Exodus 20:12 (NKJV), “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” Or, Ephesians 6:1 (NKJV), “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Or, other Scriptures about obedience to God, doing what is right or doing what is wise.

INSERT Story about the mangy dog

INSERT Story about Miss Jessy’s Jelly Curl