

Short & Sweet: Re-purposed



28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Romans 8:28-30

Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. Re-purpose.

We feel so good when we set our eco-green recycle bins by the curb. Cubicles full of soda cans, mayonnaise jars, and plastic milk cartons are sent on their way to an useful afterlife. Our carbon footprint is reduced from size 15 EEE to a petite little 5.

My grandparents were so pro with **re-purpose**/recycle movement. Like many immigrants, they were not familiar with the concept of trash. Why? Because they didn't throw anything away.

Plastic packaging did not exist.

Food was homemade—no jars, no boxes.

Sacks were turned into dresses.

Boxes were used to make furniture.

Table scraps were fed to the dogs or the pigs.

People who survived the Great Depression, plus two world wars knew how to be resourceful. They re-purposed everything.

Cleaning out the house.



When my beloved grandparents passed away, we cleaned out their basement and root cellar (Google it). We found barrels full of twist-ties, pencil stubs, steel wool, marbles, tools, nuts, bolts, books of matches, half-used notebooks and rags. My grandparents reused and recycled everything. Nothing went to waste. If it couldn't be re-used, it could be re-purposed.

Re-purpose: to change (something) so that it can be used for a different purpose

The story of my life written by God.

My purpose before B.C. (Christ Christ) was to please myself. This resulted in sin, sorrow and brokenness. Then He called into my darkness and showed me how to use my gifts and skills for their real purpose—His glory. God **re-purposed** my life, He changed something (me) so it could *be used for a different purpose*.

He re-purposes for His purpose.

God can **re-purpose** anything and anybody at anytime. That's how strong He is. He promises to use *everything* for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His ***purpose***. Good, bad, ugly, beautiful, hurtful and sinful things. All things. Don't ask me how, but I know He does. We turn and trust. We follow and obey. And He recycles, reuses, re-purposes everything for our good and His glory.

Adult bookstore to Christian bookstore,

Crack house to coffee house,

Tavern to church.

Beauty for ashes.

Grace for guilt.

Righteousness for wickedness.

All things are **re-purposed** for good.

Action Steps:

1. **Give it to Him.** Are you holding something back from God, some trash from the past? Open your hand and give it to him.
2. **Ask Him to **re-purpose** it.** Ask God to use that thing, no matter how terrible, for good. Quit letting Satan have a foothold in your life. Make his defeat complete. Ask Jesus to **re-purpose** your past mistakes for future good.
3. **Give Him thanks.** Thank God for how He will use that issue for your good and His glory. You can tell the Enemy all about it too.

Life is sweet. **Re-purpose.**

by

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Short & Sweet: How do You Identify?



He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created.

Genesis 5:2

“How do you identify?” is the hot question of the day.

Everyone is talking about it. It's trending everywhere. Our nation is embroiled in an identity crisis. Never has identity been more controversial than in the 21st century. Ironically, the question is as old as dirt.

And the Lord God formed man of the *dust* of the ground.

God formed man from dirt and breathed life into him. He *created* them male and female. Men *and* women. Not men *or* women. Created things have no choice as to what they were created to be. The sun is not the moon, oranges aren't apples, lions are not elephants. Men are not women. Straight up. To the point. No choice. Men and women were *created*. Not self-made, not man-made, but God-made. And Satan twisted God's plan.

He attacked Eve's identity.

“For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
Genesis 3:5

Satan cast doubt on the goodness of man's identity. He tempted Eve to believe God held out on her and made her less than she could be. B-list creation.

Eve fell for it—and we've been falling for it ever since.

Sin entered the world and everything was skewed, even identity; we are left wondering *whose* we are and *who* we are. Not knowing our true identity, we won't become what we were

created to be, or fulfill our calling in Christ. We will only accomplish all that God has planned for us when we are what He created us to be.

Satan also attacked Jesus' identity.

Read his words:

3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'?"

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' ...

8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, ... 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'?"

Satan thought he could cause Jesus to act apart from the will of God by casting doubt on Jesus' identity. Instead of acting on Satan's temptation to prove who He was, Jesus stood firm in His identity. He didn't need to prove or defend Himself. He knew who He was.

Where can we learn the truth about our identity?

The world cannot be trusted. Friends often lead us astray. Our heart is deceitful above all things. Our identity is found only in Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life.

In Christ we are:

1. Children of God. John 1:12
2. Accepted in Christ. Romans 15:7
3. The image of God. Genesis 1:27
4. Known by God. Jeremiah 1:5
5. Chosen by God. 1 Peter 2:9
6. One in Christ. Galatians 3:28
7. A temple of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19
8. Seated at the right hand of God and our life is hidden in Christ. Colossians 3:1-3
9. Redeemed from our sins. Ephesians 1:7
10. Restored, strengthened and established. 1 Peter 5:10

*He created them male and female, and **blessed** them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. Genesis 5:2*

There is blessing in being who God created us to be. Through Him we learn the truth about our identity so we may walk, live, look, and act like Jesus.

Final Thoughts:

1. **We do not create our identity but discover it.** Pray and read God's word. Take special note of any references to who we are in Christ.
2. **The more we learn about God, the more we learn about who we were created to be.** Since we are created in the image of God, we are to be like Him. we can learn more about God by attending a Bible-based church, by doing Bible studies, and by listening to sound Bible-based podcasts.
3. **A picture is worth a thousand words.** To see a diagram on how our identity in Christ is formed, click on this link: **Identity In Christ**

Resources:

If you are struggling with gender identification, there is help and hope! Please click on the link below for information.

Focus on the Family: Transgenderism Series

For further Bible study information, please click on any of the following links:

To Do-ers List: Study

To Do-ers List: Word in Me

Walking With God

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Short & Sweet: Trust and Relax



For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

2 Timothy 1:12

“Just relax through the pain.”

“Relax through the pain?” I thought to myself, “what an oxymoron. Who can relax through pain?”

I was suffering from something called a frozen shoulder. It happened one day when I was at recess with my students. Why I thought I had to do a cartwheel at the young age of 50 was beyond me. But I did it, and I stuck the landing.

However, I paid the price.

Now I could barely put my arm behind my back, or lift it above a 30-degree angle. I had been to the doctor several times, but I was making very little progress.

During the course of this inconvenient injury, I was attending a conference at a posh hotel in South Carolina. That’s when I met Michael—an angel who disguises himself as a massage

therapist. I scheduled a massage.

Michael greeted me for my appointment and as protocol dictates, asked me the usual pre-massage questions. I saw a spark of interest ignite in his eyes when I told him I was there not to relax, but to seek healing for my injured arm. This was not just a typical bored pampered housewife appointment—I needed real help.

There is no progress without pain.



Tweet This

As he began to go deep into the injured arm, Michael said, “Just relax through the pain.” I turned over this comment over in my mind. *Relax through the pain.* How do these concepts mesh? Is it possible to hurt yet rest? How does a person relax in pain? Michael worked as I breathed in and out.

**Mind wandering. Muscles releasing.
Stress draining.**

Suddenly, I realized to my astonishment, I was relaxing through the pain. Why? How? One word—*trust*. I trusted Michael. He knew when to stop. He knew how to probe the injury to a depth that brought healing not harm. I did not have to protect myself because he was protecting me. But he didn’t protect me out of my healing. I could relax and let him work because I trusted him.

Same thing with God.

He asks us to trust him through the pain; to give our wounds into His healing hands and let Him go deep. He knows when to stop, and when we've had enough. Left on our own, we would protect ourselves right out of our healing. But God knows how to heal, not harm. We can relax and let Him work because He is trustworthy. Healing wrapped in pain. A salve of wholeness and hurt. Buried pain exposed, cut away and removed.

Pain then healing. Hurt then wholeness.

We can relax through the pain of life because we are safe in His hands.

Trust in Him.

Action Points:

1. **What are you holding back?** Is there a painful situation you need to turn over to God? Take a step of trust and tell Him as best as you know how at this moment, you are giving this hurt to Him to heal.
2. **Envision yourself completely healed.** What would be different? What would you finally dare to do because you are completely healed?
3. **Take the first step.** What is your first step? A move? A career change? The end of a relationship? Letting go of decades old guilt or shame? The first step can be scary but also very freeing and empowering!
4. **Seek the help you need.** Counselor, pastor, doctor, mentor— whatever it takes, do it!
5. **Cover everything in prayer.** Ask God to give you His best and open wide your arms to receive it.

Life is sweet! Trust and relax.

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Short & Sweet: Go and Show



12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

Luke 17: 12-16

“And so it was that *as they went*, they were cleansed.”

Often when we think of healing, we think of resting. I sometimes actually enjoy being a *little sick*, you know, sick enough to stay home from work, but not sick enough to be truly miserable. Lolling on the couch while catching up on Downton Abbey or a favorite book are great ways to rest and recuperate.

Jesus has other ideas about healing.

Unconventional ideas. He had been known to heal people with mud and spit. He healed by a word or a touch. One woman was healed by grasping the hem of His garment. In today's Scripture, Jesus healed ten men by telling them to *take a hike*. “Go and show yourself to the priests.” Go and show. A real walk of faith.

As they went, they were cleansed.

Not as Jesus spoke, not as Jesus touched, but as they went the men were healed of the deadly disease of leprosy. Most likely the lepers had walked that road many times before. Why weren't they healed then? What made this time different?

This time they walked *by faith*.

There are two parts to every biblical healing: Jesus and faith. And faith always requires work. What if the lepers never went, what if they stayed stuck, dead in their sickness? If the lepers never *went*, they never would have been healed. Same with us. We can sit in the dust, focused on the horror of our condition OR we can walk with Jesus and be healed as we

go.

I have also been healed of a deadly crippling disease—leprosy of the soul. My sin covered me like scales on a leper. Like the lepers my sin was more than skin deep—it was sin deep. And Jesus said, *walk with Me*. So I went. Some things healed instantly, other things have been *cleansed as I went* with Jesus.

We are either in one of two places—on the roadside or on the road.

If you are on the roadside, do what the lepers did, lift your voice and call out to Him. Remember, in those days leprosy was a death sentence. Very few people survived the disease, yet still the lepers had the faith to call. The lepers were healed. I was healed. You can be healed too, but only if you call to Him.

If you are on the road to healing and wholeness, keep walking. God always heals us spiritually and sometimes He heals us physically. Other times He uses us disabilities and all. Perhaps we consider ourselves sick or disabled, but can it be we are useful in our present sickness? Are disabilities really *tools* God uses to great effect for His kingdom?

Keep walking. Whether you need healing from sickness or sin, keep walking.

Action Points:

1. **Ask for healing.** No matter how deep the need, severe the sickness, or wretched the sin, lift up your voice and ask for healing. Nothing is beyond God's ability to heal. As always, pray for God's will to be done.

2. **Go!** Keep walking with Jesus. Walking with Jesus includes: going to church, serving others, using your gifts, praying, worshiping, fellowshiping. As long as you are able, keep serving others, because emotional healing often comes through serving.
3. **Give thanks.** Give thanks to God for the healing He has worked in your life. While you are thanking God for His healing, thank Him for the many other gifts He has given you. Cultivate gratitude in your life and pay it forward.

Life is sweet! Go and show others about Jesus.

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Short & Sweet: What Do You Live For?



17 "Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live and keep Your word.

18 Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law."

Psalm 119:17-18

I can't live without my coffee, I heard someone say as she came in the door to Bible study one evening with a fragrant steaming cup in hand. I have often heard people make similar statements ... I can't do anything before my coffee ... I am nothing without my coffee ... I can't deal with life unless I have my coffee.

Coffee must be some powerful stuff.

While I realize most of these comments are made in jest, something about them gives me pause to stop and ponder. Some people, who would never think of starting their day without their cup of Joe, walk right past their Bible on the way to their favorite coffee house. Coffee is non-negotiable, and the lack there-of is a deal breaker. It's a coffee-house world view.

Whether it's coffee, an afternoon nap, or a morning run, everyone builds their life around something. What drives my life? What would cause me to say,

"I can't live without _____."

I am nothing without _____.

I can't deal with life unless I have _____. "

I know what I want it to be – God, the Bible and all things Jesus. I lived enough of my life without Jesus to know life without Jesus is not worth living. It's empty and fruitless. Yet, do I always choose Him first? Is He my priority, my everything, my non-negotiable? Do I live and keep His Word?

Let's take a close look at two important words in the verse, *live* and *keep*.

In the original language, *live* transliterates as *chayah*, which means among many things, to live, to prosper, to revive, to restore, to heal, to live prosperously. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. God's word is literally dripping with life – physical and spiritual. He resurrects dead things (relationships, dreams, and marriages) and restores broken things (hearts, souls and spirits).

***To keep* transliterates as *shamar*.**

Shamar means to guard, to protect, to watch for, to wait for, to treasure, to celebrate. Do you protect God's word in your heart by refusing to watch, read or listen to media that contradict the truth of His word? Do you wait for and watch for His word as you go through your day? Do you long for your Quiet Time or just endure it? Do you treasure His word by collecting it in your heart, displaying it on your walls or

speaking it in your conversations a



If you are like me, there have been seasons when you could have answered *no* to some or all of these questions. If you are in one of those seasons now, there is hope! Verse 18 gives us the answer.

Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.

4 Ways to Live for Jesus and Keep His Word:

1. Tell Jesus about the dryness of your heart.
2. Ask Him to help you long for His word and a deep relationship with Him.
3. Pray to Jesus to open the eyes of your heart to the truth of His word.
4. Carve the time out of your busy schedule and spend consistent time with Him everyday.

Life is sweet. Live for Him and keep His word.

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Christmas To Do-ers List: Believe Him part 2



A little something extra for Believe Him, Day 1! Please read the scripture below. Comment on how you see Ruth exercising her belief in God and what God wants you to believe today. Happy Advent!

Elimelech's Family Goes to Moab

1 Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 2 The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. 3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. 5 Then both Mahlon

and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

Naomi Returns with Ruth

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. 7 Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9 The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband."

So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. 10 And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."



11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, 13 would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!"

14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

Ruth's Commitment

16 But Ruth said:

"Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people,
And your God, my God.

17 Where you die, I will die,
And there will I be buried.
The LORD do so to me, and more also,
If anything but death parts you and me."

18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

19 Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

20 But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest."

**Don't forget to comment below on
how you will continue to believe
God today!**

Believe Him.

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