



A Path to Rediscovering the Best Years Of Your Life

Synopsis

Change may bring stress and uncertainty, but it also brings opportunities for renewed purpose that can lead you to the best years of your life.

This paper starts with two stories. Jim, who unexpectedly lost his job, grapples with uncertainty about his future. Meanwhile, Timo and his wife are seeking to engage in their new church without the risk of overextending themselves.

This paper seeks to help you reflect with God on your past and move forward with a clear sense of purpose. It is an ongoing journey, not a one-time exercise. Here's how you can do it:

1. **Step 1: Reflection:** Spend quiet time recalling memories and God's presence in your life.
2. **Step 2: Identify Joy:** Focus on moments that brought joy and mark them for further reflection.
3. **Step 3: Understand Your Joy:** Reflect on why those joyful moments were meaningful—what roles, relationships, or challenges made them special?
4. **Step 4: Define Capacity:** Set clear limits on how much time you can give to your ministry or purpose to avoid overcommitting.
5. **Step 5: Engage Select Few:** Using the model set by Jesus, select 3 or 12 partners who will support you and Journey with you in defining clear roles you are called to play.

Here you are. You are all set. Follow these five simple steps. If you need more help the following pages will give you Biblical references to guide you, as well as practical thoughts and tips to help you apply what the Bible says. Most importantly, let this be a delightful journey you can take with your best friend or best friends.

Note:

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Baha & Margaret
Habashy

At Jim's Party

At just 59, Jim had carefully planned five more years of service before retiring. But life took an unexpected turn when his employer of three decades offered him an early retirement package. Though generous on paper, it felt empty against the weight of his disappointment.

Jim, a brother in faith, invited me to his retirement party. As we celebrated, the air was thick with his uncertainty and loss. In a quiet moment, I asked, "What's next for you, Jim?" His response was sombre, "I wish I knew."

Sensing his unease, I gently said, "Jim, welcome to the freedom years. I know it's hard now, but these could be the best years of your life. You're free—free from the need for a paycheck, free to take risks, and free to dream again. These years can be about more than resting; they can be about reaching new heights and discovering God's plans for you. I pray that as you delight in the Lord, He will grant you the desires of your heart."

Jim's eyes softened, a flicker of hope beginning to replace his uncertainty.

Timo and Tonia Engaging a New Church Community

Timo, Tonia, and their three children have been attending the same church since they moved to town months ago. In their previous church, they were the go-to family, always ready to help. However, after experiencing the downsides of being constantly busy, they've been hesitant to get involved in their new church.

As a new ministry season begins, they're feeling guilty for not being more engaged with their church family. When they sought my advice, I asked, *"How much time do you want to dedicate to your church ministry each week?"* To guide them further, I explained *"Just as you budget your family finances, you also budget your time. This is your act of stewardship over the time God is giving you. Once you decide how much time you donate to the church ministry, Psalm 37:4 can be a guiding light, helping you decide where to invest your time wisely."*

Background

My life has been a journey of continual transitions. I immigrated to Canada at the age of 25, and over the past years, I've worked for eight different organizations, faced being fired three times and resigned five times. Alongside my wife, we embarked on the adventure of starting two businesses and one new ministry. Together, we've served in 9 different churches and parachurch organizations. We've also navigated the joys, challenges, and uncertainties of becoming parents and grandparents, all while embracing the complexity of being part of a large, multicultural family. What we share in this simple paper is an expression of our life journey with the hope it may be of help to those in a changing world.

Please let us explain. Now in my 80's we look back and see that times of transitions are one of God's greatest gifts. Times of transition can be moments when God delights in granting you the best desires of your heart. How do I know this? I've experienced it personally, and it's rooted in God's promise: *"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart"* Psalm 37:4. Let me remind you of a few key truths:

- Throughout your life, God has always been there. As your Heavenly Father, He has watched over you during times of joy, as well as in moments of stress and pain. There were times when He held your hand, guiding you step by step, and other times when He let you run, take chances and grow through risks and mistakes. He felt your pain when you were hurt and rejoiced with you when you were full of joy.
- Like any good father, God wants the very best for you in the stages of life to come. He seeks to mature and develop you to your fullest potential, helping you become the best version of yourself and impacting the world for His glory, according to His perfect purposes.
- No matter what stage of life you are in, God has a great purpose for you. If you seek to fulfill that purpose, He gives you the freedom to make choices that delight your heart.
- Just as a good father delight in his children's dreams, hopes, and aspirations, God delights in yours. He desires for you to dream and have big plans for your future.

In this paper, I'd like to guide you through a process—one based on the verse that I referenced earlier, Psalm 37:4. This process emphasizes the connection between our personal growth and God's larger plan, encouraging a proactive approach to vision and purpose. It also highlights the importance of community in bringing our God-given visions to life.

This simple interdependent process. In your own unique you will find how each step will relate to the other. It is meant to be devotional, a conversation between you and God, your Heavenly Father. Don't rush it. Give yourself enough time to journey with God. It may take you hours, days or even weeks. It is not a once-and-you-are-done process. It is a process that you may visit frequently as your life grants you the privilege of transitions and change. Enjoy this journey with God!

Step 1: A Walk Down Memory Lane

This first step is about reflection and connection with God. It's an opportunity to look back on your life and see it through God's eyes. Here's how to approach it:

This devotional process emphasizes the connection between our personal growth and God's larger plan, encouraging a proactive approach to vision and purpose. It also highlights the importance of community in bringing our God-given visions to life.

- **Find a Quiet Space:** Choose a place where you can be alone with your thoughts and with God. It might be a cozy corner of your home, a peaceful spot in nature or any place where you feel comfortable and undisturbed.
- **Prepare to Reflect:** Bring a pen and a notepad or journal with you. This will be your tool for capturing the memories and insights that come to you. Before you begin, take a moment to invite God into this time. Pray and ask Him to guide your thoughts, to help you remember all that He has done in your life.
- **Begin Your Conversation with God:** Start by talking to God as if He were sitting right beside you. A suggested prayer could be:
 - *“Father, you’ve been with me every day of my life. You remember everything—my joys, my struggles, my successes, and my failures. You’ve seen all my relationships, both good and bad. Please help me remember all I’ve done and all I’ve been. Remind me of every role I’ve taken on, every responsibility I’ve had, from my childhood up until today.”*
- **Listen and Write:** After praying, sit quietly, and let memories come to you. As they do, write them down without overthinking or analyzing them. Just capture the details—events, tasks, roles, responsibilities, and relationships. Write down everything, the good and the bad, without judgment. **This is what we call a “memory dump,” where you release everything onto the page.**
- **Trust in God’s Guidance:** Believe that God wants to help you remember and reflect. In **Jeremiah 33:3** God tells us *“Call to me and I will answer you. I’ll tell you marvellous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own.”* God promises to answer and reveal things we cannot discover on our own. Take your time with this step, allowing God to speak to you through your memories.

Step 2: Delight Your Heart

In this step, the focus shifts to identifying what has truly brought you joy, delight, and fulfillment in life. Here’s how to do it:

- **Continue Your Conversation with God:** Once you’ve compiled your list of memories, ask God to guide you in recognizing which of these moments brought true joy and satisfaction. You might say:
 - *“Father, as I walk through these memories, please show me which moments brought me joy, delight, and a sense of fulfillment.”*
- **Review Your List:** Slowly read through the list you created in Step 1. As you do, start categorizing your experiences:

- **Mark with (1):** Any memory that brings back a sense of joy, delight or fulfillment should be marked with a (1). These are the moments that truly touched your heart.
- **Mark with (3):** Memories that bring up feelings of pain, discomfort or distance should be marked with a (3).
- **Mark with (2):** Everything else—those neutral or less significant memories—should be marked with a (2).
- **Group Your Joyful Memories:** Once you've categorized everything, gather all the (1) items together. These are the memories where your heart finds true delight. This grouping helps you focus on what has been most meaningful and fulfilling in your life.

Step 3: Understanding What Delights Your Heart

The final step is about understanding why certain moments brought you joy and how God may be guiding you forward. Here's how to proceed:

- **Continue Your Conversation with God:** Now that you have a list of joyful memories, ask God to help you understand why these experiences were so meaningful. You might pray:
 - *"Father, you know my thoughts and motives. Please reveal to me why these moments brought joy, delight, or fulfillment to my heart."*
- **Meditate on Your Joyful Memories:** Take time to reflect on the (1) items you've identified. Think about what made these moments special. What roles were you playing? What did you learn? What did you accomplish? What challenges did you overcome? Who were you with? As you meditate, journal your thoughts in detail. This reflection will help you gain deeper insight into what truly fulfills you.
- **Identify Key Insights:**
 - **Roles You Played:** Reflect on the broader roles you've taken on in life. These roles go beyond specific jobs or titles—they reflect your contributions, your impact, and the ways you've served others. For example, you might have been a teacher, but the roles that brought you fulfillment and greatest impact were that of a mentor, guide or encourager.
 - **Relationships of Impact:** Relationships are a key part of our fulfillment, and understanding these connections can reveal God's purposes in your life. Take note of the people who were part of these joyful memories. Who did you help? Who helped you? What roles did they play in your life?
 - **Issues and Challenges That Sparked Your Imagination:** Issues are the areas where your passions may be revealed. Think about the issues or challenges that engaged your mind and heart. These could be areas where you made a significant impact or where you felt

God's presence most strongly. These could be the areas where God has called you to serve and contribute.

Step 4: Define Your Ministry Capacity

Your ministry or work capacity is defined by the amount of time you can devote to the roles you accept to play. God has already defined that you have only 168 hours a week. No less no more. The Bible spells very clear guidelines on how you prioritize where you spend your time. For an illustration of these thoughts see <https://youtu.be/J81FT06z4Yw?si=zylz2wFucQJcqDkU>

According to the Parable of the Ten Minas, Luke 19:11-27, you are accountable ONLY to God for where you spend your time. Please do not accept any role until you have clearly defined the amount of time you can invest in this role. Along with this define the guard rails that protect you from over-commitment and what we call "Scope Creep".

Step 5: Developing Your Purpose and Vision

This process isn't just about looking back; it's about moving forward with a renewed sense of God's presence and direction in your life so you can fulfill your life purpose. So how do you define your life purpose? The Catechism of the early church reminds us that *"The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever."* This is God's ultimate purpose for your life. How you fulfill this is wide open to your imagination as long as it fits within the boundaries of Micah 6:8 says *"What does the LORD require of you but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?

Parents often ask their children this question, not only to encourage their dreams but also because they hold hopes for a brighter future. It's a way for parents to understand their child's interests and passions, guiding them toward fulfilling their potential. In much the same way, your Heavenly Father is constantly asking, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" He asks this because He desires your growth and knows the importance of having a vision for your life. As Proverbs 29:18 says, *"Where there is no vision, people perish."* Without a clear vision, we risk stagnation, which grieves the heart of our loving Father.

In his great book, *Experiencing God*, Dr. Henry Blackaby, a respected author and pastor, offers a profound insight: *"If you want to experience God, look for where He is working and join Him."* You and I are called to be co-labourers with Jesus in advancing His kingdom.

The Holy Spirit is engaged in all the issues that impact our world today. He is playing more roles than we can identify in this small paper. To help you envision your co-labourer role, on the following page, you'll find two images of the world map. One illustrates some of the many issues God cares about in His kingdom. The second illustrates some roles you may be called to play in the kingdom of God.

As you reflect on what delights your heart, seek to identify roles you may wish to play. How would you finish the sentence, **"I wish I could..."**? Use your imagination to complete that sentence, or even write several similar sentences. Try to visualize what life would look like if God gave you the desire of your heart.

In your mind's eye or on a sheet of paper, start to paint a picture of what you see. Does this picture bring glory to God? Will it help you enjoy him now and forever? Will it help you *"act justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"* Micah 6.8

Following Jesus' Model for Meaningful Connections

It has been wisely said, "Who you know is more important than what you know." **Why?** Because life is all about relationships and communication is the lifeblood of all good relationships.

Don't keep your vision to yourself—share it with those you've encountered along your life journey. Seek their input and affirmation. By opening up about your dreams, you invite collaboration, encouragement, and support from people eager to see God's work unfold in and through you. As you do, God, along with His people, will guide you and provide opportunities to bring your vision to life. This is how you will experience the best years of your life.

How Do You Do This?

The devotional model we've shared so far reminds me of how Jesus took 40 days in conversation with the Father to confirm His vision and purpose. His next step was to choose those who would journey with Him during the following three years. Following His example, consider this framework: The One, The Seventy-Two, The Twelve, and The Three.

1. **The One:** Your relationship with Jesus is the most important. That's why the first four steps of your journey were a deeply personal, devotional exercise with Him. As 1 Corinthians 3:9 says, "You are co-workers with Christ." He must remain your most important partner and counsellor. Commit to regular one-on-one time with Him. Ask Him to guide you in selecting others who will join you on this journey.
2. **The Seventy-Two:** In Luke 10, we read that Jesus selected 72 followers and sent them out to explore the villages. Similarly, from your network of contacts—those you've encountered throughout your life—create a list of 72 people who would be interested in your vision. Begin connecting with them.
3. **The Twelve:** In Mark 3:13-19, Jesus selected 12 disciples to accompany Him on His three-year mission. Out of your 72, choose 12 who show a deeper interest and commitment. These will be the ones who pray for you and support where God is leading you.
4. **The Three:** Jesus had Peter, James, and John—His closest companions. Likewise, narrow your group to three trusted individuals who will serve as your most intimate mentors, advisors, and partners in this exciting journey.

Issues In The Kingdom of God



Roles In The Kingdom of God

