



# PURPOSE UNLOCKED

*Discovering Purpose & Destiny for  
Our Lives from the Inside Out*

OLAYINKA D. ALMAROOF

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by

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*Purpose UNLOCKED: Discovering Destiny and Purpose for Our Lives from the Inside Out*  
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*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.*

Colossians 1:16 MSG

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# *Introduction*

*What do you want to be when you grow up?*

I recall being asked that question as early as five or seven years of age.

My earliest answer, “*a pediatrician.*”

I’m not sure why I wanted to be a doctor at the time. I grew up in a Nigerian household, so maybe I was programmed to want to be a doctor, lawyer, or scientist of some sort. Or perhaps I heard one of my older sisters say it. Baby sister syndrome. I was sick a lot as a child too. Between chronic ear infections, asthma, and one surgical stint with tonsillectomy, I was always in and out of the hospital as a child. Men and women in white coats always surrounded me. So maybe, I simply grew to love the many doctors who poked and probed at me as a youngster.

Honestly, I don’t remember.

What I do remember — my earliest answer to the question, “*what do you want to be when you grow up?*”

“*A pediatrician.*”

Later in life, I would grow to dislike school and then learn how much schooling one had to embark on to become a doctor and would soon scrap that idea. Also, I kind of hate the smell of hospitals. As the years went on, I don’t recall the varying answers to that question. However, in high school, senior year, I do remember being posed with a similar but slightly different question:

“*What do you plan to do with your life after high school?*”

The question came from a loving but concerned administrator who believed in my potential but wasn’t too sure if I believed in myself.



At seventeen years old, I had no idea of *what* I wanted to be when I grew up and no idea of *who* I wanted to be. In hindsight, how could I? So, I blurted out what I thought was the easiest path and the most common answer I heard to the question:

*“A teacher.”*

And that’s no disrespect to teachers. They don’t get enough credit, and they surely don’t get paid enough.

From pediatrician to a teacher.

As I reflect on it, I found a trend. I always wanted to help people in some form or fashion, and I specifically wanted to help children. I now realize, helping others was a bread crumb God had left for me to follow. These bread crumbs would later in life lead me to my purpose and destiny. Although I didn’t become a teacher or pediatrician, I still work with children in a different capacity.

You may be wondering, well, what did she grow up to be? I think it is the perfect mix between a doctor and a teacher. Funny how God works that way. I grew up to be a Speech Language Pathologist. A Speech Language Pathologist is a licensed specialist who evaluates, diagnoses, and treats (there’s the doctor connection) a wide range of communication disorders. As Speech Language Pathologists, we have the flexibility to work in various settings, such as hospitals, outpatient clinics, nursing homes, and schools. I chose to work in the educational sector, working with school-aged children (there’s the teacher connection) who present with various speech and language disorders.

*Purpose Wisdom Nugget: follow the bread crumbs.*

Let’s backtrack a little.

Between the ages of seven and seventeen, I did discover an unspoken love for writing. As I look back over my life, I knew I wanted to be a writer by sixteen.

When I was about seven or eight years old, my mom bought me this orange and yellow Fisher Price desk. I loved that desk. It makes me smile now, seeing myself carrying that little plastic desk from the living room to the dining room, to my bedroom. The desk stood on two long legs, which wrapped from the front of the desk to the back. The top of the desk also opened

up to a storage compartment. That hidden compartment is where I stored my papers and writing utensils. I would sit at that desk for hours, writing songs and short stories. Felicia and Jennifer (being typical big sisters) would sneak into my desk and read my work. Then they would laugh and tease me about my writings. I would fight with them, grabbing for my pieces of art. I remember writing my first short story in middle school. It was a love story about my first puppy love (figures, rolls eyes at myself). I was so excited about what I created, I took it to school and shared it with some friends. The short story was so good; it passed through too many hands to keep up with, and I never saw that short story again.

By middle school, I discovered my love for writing and storytelling.

However, artistry or creative passions weren't highlighted as ideal paths to success in my world. Being a writer wasn't something I was exposed to as a child. I did not know any artists or individuals who made a great living off of creative avenues. So when the high school counselor asked what I wanted to study in college, I said, "*I don't know.*" Even though my initial thought when she asked was writing or English. In English, we were often required to write papers and short essays, and I thoroughly enjoyed completing those assignments.

During my late twenties, I realized I couldn't get away from writing. I loved working as a therapist, but there was still this longing I felt inside. I always sensed it was something more God wanted me to do. I went to school to study a great profession, but writing was my purpose—my destiny —my calling —and it wouldn't stop calling me.

I want to say this. Our professions can be a purpose tool God uses to shape the gifts we will utilize once operating in our purpose. So we shouldn't minimize our vocational work. Also, for some people, your profession *is* your calling or purpose. Or, like me, it's a part of it.

*Purpose Wisdom Nugget: if your purpose is your current profession or job, know you aren't just there to do your job, collect a check, and go home. God called you to your place of employment to be a source of light in that sphere of influence. Bring God into it. Enhance the culture of that workplace; bring order to the environment; shed light on negative practices in the space, or bring a coworker to Christ. Sometimes He calls us to work with a God level of excellence that changes the way others operate in the profession for generations to come. Don't just work to work; work with purpose in mind.*

When it came to my purpose journey, no matter what I did in life or what path I took, I landed right back on writing. I now know—a writer was not what I *wanted* to be when I grew up, but writing was what I was *created to do*.

See, there's another question that falls in line with, "*What do you want to be when you grow up,*" or "*What do you want to study when you go to college?*" As we grow older, we often begin to wonder is there more to life than waking up every day and going to a job we hate or one that brings us little to no fulfillment. Or if there is more to life than bi-weekly paychecks and countdowns until the weekend or next vacation. As we look for answers to life's fulfillment, our internal man begins to pose a different question. We think about this when we are getting ready for work in the morning, fixing our children's dinner, and lying in bed next to our spouses at night. No one else has to ask us this question because we are continually asking it ourselves.

*"What is my purpose?"*

*What was I created to do?*

*Who was I created to be?*

The question comes in many forms, but at the end of the day, we all want to know why God put us here on this earth. What is the mission we are to complete? What is the purpose we are to pursue that allows us to live life to the fullest? What is our life's great commission that grants us the blessing of manifesting the fullest expression of our inner man? If you've ever wondered to yourself or even asked God any of those questions—you aren't alone, and you do have a purpose. God created everything and every person with a purpose in mind.

Purpose is simply the reason for which we exist—the *intended* use of a person or thing. Purpose is the assignment or mission we were sent to earth to complete—the position of service we were divinely selected to occupy. Purpose speaks to how God planned to *use* each us during our time here on earth. However, the answer to this question isn't found in the world around us—it comes from within. Purpose is discovered from the inside out. God placed the answers to identity, purpose, and destiny inside the depths of each human soul. It is one of our life's missions to look deep within and unlock the truth of who we are and what we were created to do. We have to look inward, search the spirit, and then express that internal plan outwardly to impact

change in our spheres of influence, in our communities, families, in the world, and most importantly, in the Kingdom of God.

As my years went on, I began to see that God had left bread crumbs of my purpose and destiny throughout my life. The gift of writing, the love for people, the desire to help people overcome the physical and spiritual ailments life had dumped on them. I hope that while reading this book, you will discover the bread crumbs in your own life.

My life completely changed when God revealed His purposes for my life.

I pray the same for you.

I stand in faith and declare after you read the final page and close this book signifying its completion, you will know the answer to the age-old question, "*What is my purpose?*"

My prayer is —this book will be the guide that helps you unlock these truths which lay deep within.

I pray this book and these principles help you put out that burning desire present in every human soul.

Or better yet, I pray it burns even deeper and sets your inner desires aflame!

## ***IDENTITY***

*Like most things in life, purpose starts with identity.*

## ***REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE***

*So, God created man in His own image...*

Genesis 1:27

July 2019, a month most adults born in the 1980s and early 1990s eagerly awaited. The live action release of one of our classic childhood movies —*The Lion King*.

If I'm honest, I didn't like *The Lion King* growing up. Before you judge, let's remember, Mufasa is killed by a herd of Wildebeest while trying to save Simba, and then Simba sort of exiles himself from his home for many years.

Depressing much?

Then there's Scar, and even now, Scar is a little scary.

However, when Disney decided to remake a live action version of the film, including all our favorite characters like Mufasa, Simba, and Nala. Then decided some of today's biggest stars like Beyoncé and Childish Gambino would play those beloved characters. We were all sold and couldn't wait to see this story retold on the big screen. On July 17<sup>th</sup>, the first day of release, I took myself to see *The Lion King* and came out with much more than I expected.

There's this one scene in the movie (spoiler alert) where Simba is confronted by the spirit of his father, Mufasa. During this conversation, Mufasa tells Simba to "*Remember who you are.*" As I was sitting in the movie theater, now an adult who had once seen this movie many times, many years ago, that proclamation and call to *remembrance* resonated in my spirit and stood out to me like never before. Days after seeing the film, I couldn't shake that line:

*"Remember who you are."*

I kept asking God, "*What is it about this line, and why won't You allow me to shake it.*"

(Okay, I know you're probably thinking, "*Are we really sitting here discussing the Lion King?*" but stay with me, we are going somewhere.)

There was this sense of power that came over Simba when he remembered his *identity*. After Mufasa commanded Simba to remember who he was, Simba would return home, defeat his

evil Uncle Scar, and take his rightful place as king over The Pride Lands. I like to believe that Simba stepped into his purpose and destiny after this call of remembrance.

As I was sitting in my apartment thinking about the movie and that line, another very familiar story came to mind. This story also speaks of a son who comes from a prominent family, makes a personal decision to leave home, falls into hardship, and forgets who he is. When he remembers who he is, he returns home and takes his rightful place in his father's house. This very familiar story is the biblical account of the prodigal son. The story of the prodigal son is found in Luke 15:11-32.

But there was one part of this passage that God illuminated for me in a new way:

*“But when he came to himself, he said,  
‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough  
and to spare, and I perish with hunger!’*

Luke 15:17 NKJV

*“But when he came to himself.”*

It's when the prodigal son remembers who he is, *“when he comes to himself,”* and has the epiphany of who he is and, better yet, who his father is, that he returns home. Same as the fictional character Simba:

*Remember who you are.*

*Remember your lineage.*

*Remember the favor bestowed upon you for merely being your father's heir.*

*Return to yourself.*

*Return home.*

*Walk into who you were destined to be.*

As the days went on, I continued to petition God for the full revelation of what He was trying to illustrate and teach me about identity remembrance. Eventually, He began to make it clear.

For years, God had been progressively teaching me and instilling in my spirit the importance of identity. So much so, in my last two bodies of work, I talked extensively about

identity. However, even as I was writing those chapters of my previous books, I now realize I hadn't grasped the full revelation of what God was trying to teach. Until now.

What God was instilling and drilling into me over the last few years can be summed up in these three words:

*Identity is everything.*

Knowing who you are is the beginning *and* end of everything. It's the beginning of life, purpose, self-awareness, self-love, healthy relationships, stable confidence, wholeness, eternal fulfillment, and everything in between. It is the end to insecurity, uncertainty, wandering, and the end to those people, places, and habits that do not honor who we are. Identity drives the very path we all will take in life. A sense of identity leads us down paths of wholeness and prosperity in all areas of our lives. While a lack of identity leads us down paths of destruction and chaos. Identity is the first thing that we should instill in our children, and it is the first thing we should explore before doing anything in this life.

We tap into an internal and eternal power when we finally discover who we are and *whose* we are, and become grounded in those truths. Self-awareness helps us discover the vision God planned for our lives, and it also gives us the power to walk down that path boldly and unapologetically.

## **IDENTITY CRISIS**

We are in an epidemic. The world is suffering from an influx of identity crisis. We have been conditioned to look to the world to show us who we are. Whether through social media influence or influences from family and friends, we struggle with discovering who we are because we are continually looking to others to tell us who to be. We are constantly comparing ourselves against others and adjusting our lives and identities to what seems to be the "thing" to be in life. We adjust the way we look, dress, our goals, aspirations, hobbies, behaviors, and with this new wave of online entrepreneurship, what we were created to do in life. As a result of these external influences, many of us have difficulty discovering *what we were created to do* because we have yet to discover *who we are*. Before we can answer the "*What is my purpose*" question, we must answer the "*Who am I*" question. The first step on the journey of discovering what we



were created to *do* —starts with discovering who we were created to *be*. The doing starts with the being —the *what* starts with the *who*. Before you do anything in life, you have to start with *self*. From this place of identity, we can say, “*This is who I am, and now this is what I was created to do.*”

Identity is the first purpose mystery we must unlock, and to answer the identity question, we must