



DESIGNED
FOR *Move*



Purpose Discovery Course

PARTICIPANTS JOURNAL

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MODULE ONE: GOD'S PURPOSE - THE STORY THAT SHAPES OURS

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO PURPOSE DISCOVERY COURSE

Our aim in this Purpose Discovery Course is to help you get more clarity of your purpose. This course is a process of discernment and exploration that will help deepen your understanding of who you are becoming and lay a foundation to engage effectively by participating in change that aligns with God's purpose in the context where God has placed you.

The goal of this course is to help you:

- EXPLORE** who God has made you to be and the context/roles where God has placed you
- CLARIFY** how to more closely align your thinking, longings, actions and relationships within God's purposes
- ENGAGE** effectively as a witness for Jesus by participating in change that aligns with God's purpose

To register for this Purpose Discovery course, identify your current levels of clarity in your purpose and get online access to all videos and resources for this course via the Seed Academy, please answer the following questions at this QR code or link

<https://www.seed.org.au/purpose-discovery-pre-course-survey/>

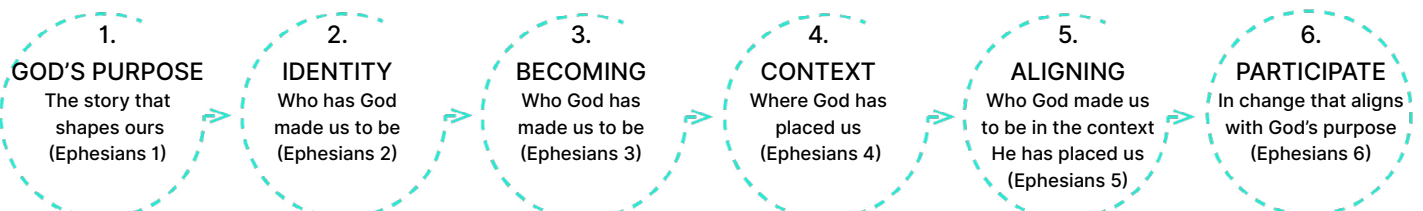
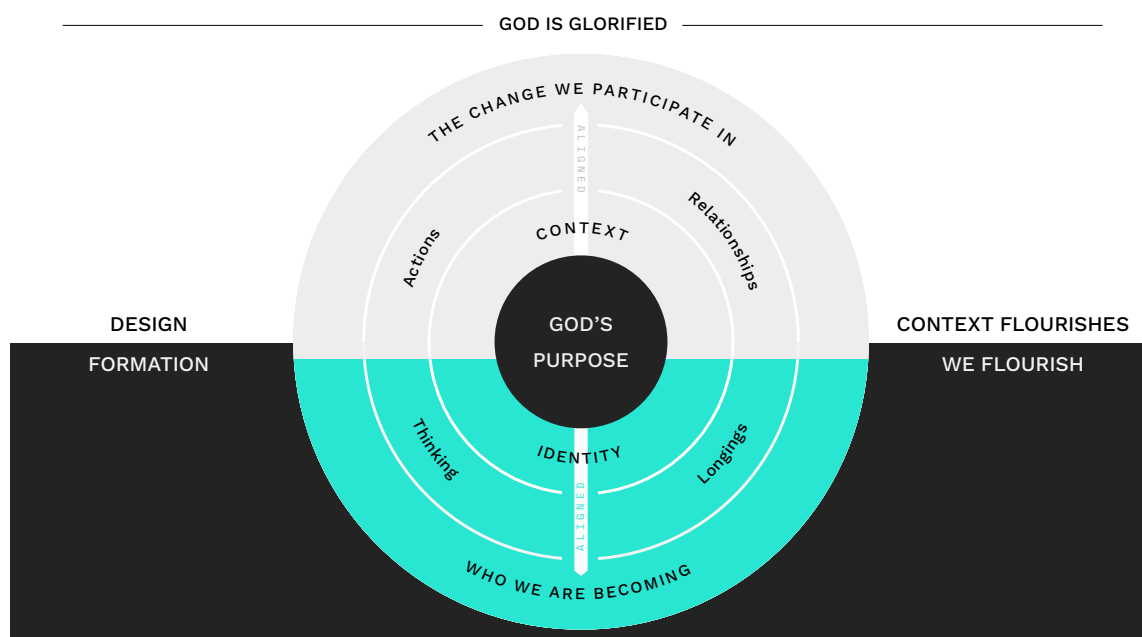


1.2 THE FOUNDATION OF SEED'S APPROACH

The diagram below outlines the Foundation of Seed's approach and this Purpose Discovery Course. At the centre of our discovery process and the foundation for everything is **God's purpose** — the story that shapes who we are becoming and the change we participate in.

PART 1 (Module 1-3) is focused on our formation to gain greater clarity about how we can become who God has made us to be.

PART 2 (Module 4-6) is focused on design to gain greater clarity about how we can participate in God's work of redemption and renewal in the context where God has placed us.



WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS COURSE?

This course is Biblically based and is a forward focused process of discovery and discernment that integrates activities, videos, tools, discussion topics and action plans with a journey through the book of Ephesians. The time and energy you put into this course will determine what you will get out of it.

Though we hope you will explore some meaningful and important aspects of your whole life, this course is not designed as a self-help, counselling support group format. We believe that a primarily past focused or therapeutic natured course is not appropriate without trained and experienced facilitation. Please ask your Pastor or leader to point you in the direction of further support should you require it.

1.3 WHY PURPOSE?

WHAT DO YOU THINK PURPOSE ACTUALLY MEANS?

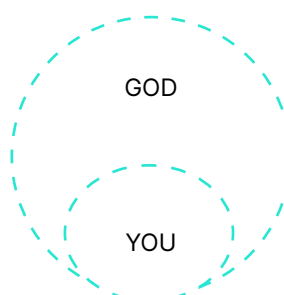
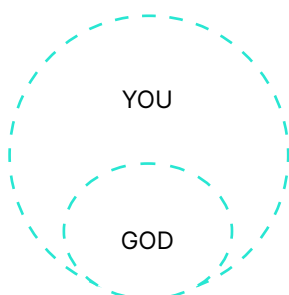
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS YOUR PURPOSE?

WHERE MIGHT PEOPLE LOOK TO DISCOVER THEIR PURPOSE?

TWO WAYS OF FINDING PURPOSE:

Many people think that purpose is about self-determination and their pursuit of purpose seeks to put everything (including God) into their story.

We find our purpose by first examining the purpose for which we were created. God's purpose is the central foundation for finding our purpose and place in the world. In Genesis 1, we see the simple but profound reality that God is creator and when God creates, He does so in accordance with His purposes, including when He made us. Finding your purpose is not a process of self-determination; it is about discovering who God made you to be through a process of discernment and faithfulness. It is a process of seeking to align yourself and what you do in the world with God's purposes. And that is the Purpose Discovery journey this course will take you on.





1.4 GOD'S PURPOSE - EPHESIANS 1:1-14

There are a variety of perspectives across the church regarding what God's purpose is. For example:

To make Disciples — God's purpose is primarily about people and their salvation. God wants to call people to Himself and be in relationship with people.

To establish Shalom — God's purpose is primarily about the world God created. This includes people, but is focused on the renewal of all things and is often particularly expressed in the establishment of Justice.

To give God glory — God's creation is about God and his glory. God desires to be known. People and creation respond with praise, enjoying God's presence.

All of these conceptions of purpose are clearly present in the Bible. Each of them highlights a key aspect of God's intention in creating us. Arguments about the priority of one over the other tend to miss the point that each of these concepts is essential for the other.

One of the clearest indications of the purposes of God in Scripture is found in the book of Ephesians. The first chapter, Ephesians 1, shows us that God is inviting us into His plans, His purpose, and His story rather than us inviting God into our story. God's purpose for you is connected to God's purposes for the world.

We understand God's purpose primarily through God's revelation and blessings to us in and through Jesus. God is glorified both by us and by the demonstration of His grace and power as we are becoming and participating in His purpose and story.

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

Paul lists the spiritual blessings available to us in Christ (v3). What is it that stands out to you about these blessings?

"For the praise of His glory" is constantly repeated (v6,12,14). Why do you think Paul repeats this phrase?

We often personalise God's purpose, focusing on what it means for us. How does v.9-10 challenge this?

What else does Ephesians 1 reveal about God's purpose and ours?



1.5 NOW WHAT? PRAYING FOR GOD'S STORY TO SHAPE OURS (EPHESIANS 1:15-23)

As you seek to discern your place within God's story and gain greater clarity about how you can become who God has made you to be and how you can participate in God's work of redemption and renewal, we encourage you to use Ephesians 1:15-23 as a foundational prayer for yourself and one another throughout this course.

In the next module we are going to be looking at identity. Thinking more about your identity and story is a critical part of understanding God's purpose for you. But it is only by placing our story within His story can we have any sense of purpose. Before the next module:

Access Seed Academy. Within the next few days after completing the pre-course survey above, you will receive a link to the Seed Academy so you can access all materials and videos that will be shared in this course.

Watch the video on Seed Academy: 1.5 Now What? God's Story shapes ours.

Reflect and pray about the significance of where you fit within God's story.

MODULE TWO: IDENTITY - WHO HAS GOD MADE US TO BE

2.1 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY – OUR STORY WITHIN GOD’S STORY

Our identity, who we are and who we are becoming, is one of the two key pillars for discerning our God-given purpose. Our identity is formed by God’s story and shaped by God’s grace.

God designates those who know him to be new creations (2 Cor 5:17); citizens of God’s kingdom (Eph 2:19); and children of God (Gal 3:26) — these are all statements of identity. Our God-given identity is discovered not self-determined.

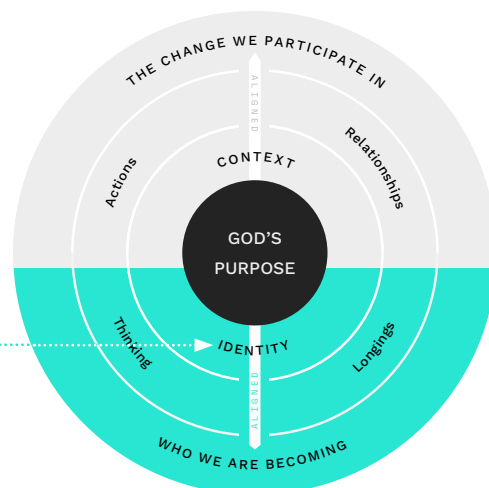
In this module we will be discerning who God has made us to be— clarifying our identity, story and purpose within God’s story and purpose rather than the other way round of trying to fit God’s story into ours. Doing this fundamentally reframes the story we are often told (or tell ourselves) about who we are.

We are invited to reframe our story within God’s story as the primary source of our individual and collective identity.

2.2 EXPRESSING IDENTITY

I AM...

WE ARE...



2.3 FOCUS ON THE BIG PICTURE

WHAT IS GOD’S STORY?

Human beings are shaped by our worldview. A worldview is a story that explains what the world is about and why it exists. We are also shaped by the other stories we are part of, such as our family story or a cultural story.

For followers of Jesus, God’s story is the story that shapes our understanding of the world, and why we exist. God’s story is where we find our meaning and purpose.



The big picture of God's story can be summarised as a four-act story of creation, fall, redemption and renewal:

Creation tells the story of beginnings in which we see God's ideal for what He has created.

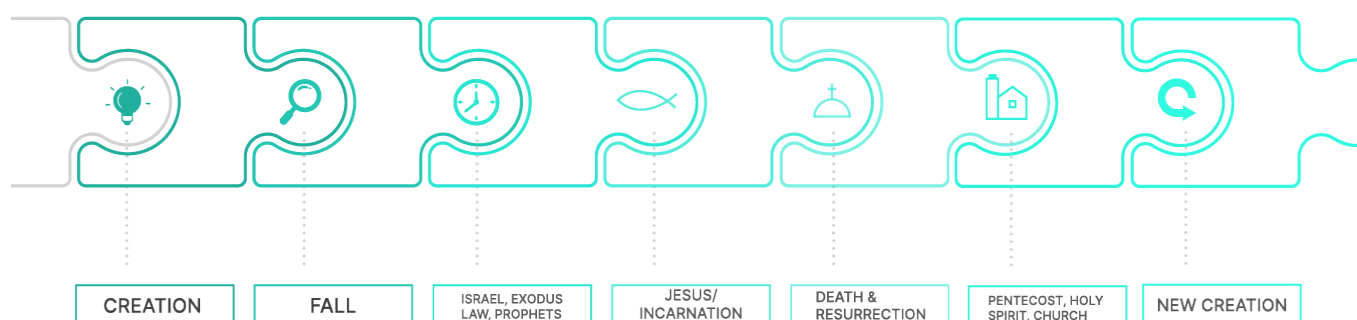
In Genesis 1:26-27, we find that humans are made in the image of God. As image-bearers, a key part of our purpose, is to get to know God, then bear God's image in the world.

The fall (Genesis 3) introduces the problem of sin. Through human sinfulness, we find that our relationship with God, and therefore our ability to fulfill our purpose as image-bearers of God in the world, is broken.

The solution is the good news of what God has done to bring redemption through Jesus Christ. In response to this good news, followers of Jesus repent and believe (Mark 1:15).

It is from Jesus Christ that the final act of renewal of all things flows. As fallen yet redeemed image bearers who follow Jesus, we participate in God's purpose for the renewal of all creation (2 Cor 5:17-6:1).

All the acts are vital and are interwoven within the storyline of the Bible:



WHAT IS OUR STORY WITHIN GOD'S STORY?

Within this story, we are neither the author nor the key actor. We join in God's purpose. We are part of God's story. God's story shapes our understanding of our identity, of who we are.

A foundational pillar of purpose is discerning who God has made us to be - clarifying our story, identity and purpose within God's purpose and story. We continue to discover our identity and purpose by soaking ourselves in the story of God, particularly as revealed in the Bible.

We often think that discovering purpose is about working out what we should do. You might have joined this course in the hope of getting clarity on that question! What we do is important, but the foundation for purpose is about **who we are**, not **what we do**. God created and called us to be someone before sending us to do anything.

2.4 A NEW IDENTITY – EPHESIANS 2

Read Ephesians 2:1-22.

In Ephesians 2 we find that what happens when we receive and accept God's grace through Jesus is not a mere transaction from dead to alive, or sinner to saved. God offers us a completely new identity. Rather than dead sinners (2:1-3), God's grace makes us alive with Christ. As a result, we are seen and known as God's handiwork (2:4-10), as citizens of God's kingdom, as members of God's household (2:19), and as God's holy dwelling place (2:21-22). As a result, we "walk in the world" in a completely different way (See also Colossians 3:1-11; 2 Cor 5: 17).

"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" Ephesians 2:9-10 NIV

What caused the shift from "you were" (v1-3, 11-13) to "you are" (v10,19,22) in Ephesians 2?

Why is it important to understand this change as a "gift" (v9)?

What does verse 10 reveal about God's purpose for us?

What does it mean for you to be both a member of God's household and his dwelling place (v.19-22)?

How might this chapter of Ephesians help you reframe your identity?



2.5 YOUR PURPOSE STORYBOARD

The Purpose Storyboard Tool (on next page) provides a framework for exploring and understanding the first pillar—your God-given identity. Our story is our expression of how we see ourselves, of who we believe ourselves to be, or how we would like others to perceive us. Stories also give us insights into who God made us to be and what God is leading us to do in the world.

The storyboard helps you reflect on the stories and experiences that God has used to shape you. This includes how your identity, and your sense of purpose are being formed by God's story and shaped by God's grace. It then provides a way of identifying your context, giftings, passions, causes and vision so that you can prayerfully reflect on which elements are important for discerning your own sense of God-given purpose and next steps. We will come back to this process in the coming modules.



2.6 NOW WHAT? REFRAME & SHARE YOUR STORY

REFRAME - HOW CAN I KEEP REFRAMING MY STORY AND DEEPEN MY IDENTITY IN CHRIST?

"You need the love, the approval, the esteem of someone you esteem if you are going to have any self- esteem."
– Timothy Keller

There are hundreds of stories that shape us each day, through media, advertising, family and community. Our challenge is to identify where these stories are aligned with, or contrary to what God says to be true of our identity and the world.

Prayerfully reflect if there are any parts of your identity and story that could be more aligned with God's story. Ask God to help you reframe your story to be within God's story and strengthen your identity in who God has made you to be in Christ.

Once you have considered how you might need to reframe your story and completed your Purpose Storyboard (following page), identify someone who knows you well.

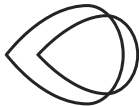
Ask them if they would be happy to listen to you share your Purpose Storyboard with them. Allow 30 minutes to share your story

Allow them to reflect back to you what they heard, highlighting the elements that stand out to them and invite them to share what they see as some of your Giftings, Passions, Causes. Then discuss together, exploring the question — "who has God made you to be?"

Ask them to pray for you as you seek to discover more of God's purpose.

Pray through any feedback you got and make any changes to your Storyboard.

If you want to reflect further on your unique 'S.H.A.P.E' (Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experience), do a free assessment at <https://www.freeshapetest.com/>



SEED

Purpose Storyboard (a story within a story)

HISTORY (storyline) Who or what has God used to shape you?	CONTEXT PLACE - where has God placed you NOW? PEOPLE - who are you serving NOW?	PASSION (character profile) What do you love doing? Who do you do this with?	VISION (ending) God willing, what do you dream your life and impact might look like in the future? What do you long for?
	GIFTING (character profile) What are you 'naturally' good at? How do you use those gifts for the building up of the body? (Eph 4:11-13)	CAUSES (plot) What tensions do you feel? What problems do you want to solve?	



My Identity Statement - "I am God's handiwork..." (Eph 2:10a) My Purpose Statement - "Created in Christ Jesus to..." (Eph 2:10b)

MODULE THREE: BECOMING WHO GOD MADE YOU TO BE

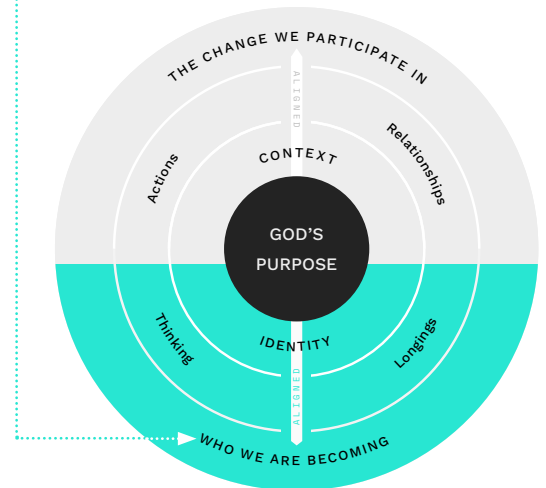
3.1 WHO WE ARE BECOMING

Once we understand our identity in Christ, we seek to embody—to live into and up to—the reality of who God has already made us to be through his grace in Jesus Christ in the contexts where God has placed us. This is key to discovering our purpose!

Understanding our identity is only a starting point. Living a life aligned with that identity, becoming who God made us to be, is central to our purpose, and the clearest way that we contribute to God's purposes.

God invites us not only to belong to Him but to participate in His purpose — in His mission. We are invited to become disciples of Jesus, and to discern and receive God's invitation to align the way we think, what we believe and what we long for with what God desires for us.

In this module we will discern what we consider to be most important, what we value, what is motivating us and what we are longing for. Part of this involves exploring whether these values and longings are aligned with God's design and intent for us and for who God has made us to be.



3.2 OUR PURPOSE FLOWING FROM GOD'S PURPOSE — EPHESIANS 3:7-13

Read Ephesians 3:7-13

In the first 3 chapters of Ephesians, Paul explores this question of purpose: “why is God doing this?” Ephesians 3:10 is the culmination of this exploration. Paul concludes that through His people (the church), the wisdom of God should be made known. God is glorified when the creation (including heavenly realms) looks on and sees in us an embodiment of the transformation that God achieves through his grace in Jesus. There is no hidden plan—God's eternal purpose has been accomplished in Christ. This means that through Christ we can approach God with freedom and confidence.

What does Paul understand to be his purpose (see verses 7-9)?

How does Paul's purpose and who he was flow out of God's purpose (see verses 10-11)?

How does God invite His people to participate in His purpose?

What does it practically mean for you to participate in His purposes?

3.3 EXPLORING YOUR VALUES

As we seek to understand who we are becoming and how that shapes our purpose, we need to dig deeper into our beliefs, thinking and longings. Exploring what we believe to be important to us, our values, can be a helpful first step. We can then seek to discern if what is motivating us, our longings, is aligned with God's design and intent for us and who God has made us to be.

PART ONE - IDENTIFY YOUR VALUES

What are values? Personal values are the general expression of what is most important for you. Your values are the things that you believe are important in the way you live and work. When the things that you do and the way you behave match your values you are likely to be satisfied and content. You clarify and communicate through your actions the deeply held beliefs — values, principles, standards, ethics, and ideals — that drive you and represent who you are.¹ Values generally determine your actions and relationships, as well as the priorities and decisions you make in the context where God has placed you. Having a clearer understanding of our values allows us to articulate what is important to us and this in turn provides us with clarity when it comes to making both the life-changing decisions and the daily decisions and ultimately the way we seek to walk with Jesus.

Step 1 — Circle any of the words on the list on the following page that you feel are really important to you in life (feel free to also add your own).

Step 2 — Identify your top 10. From those circled, put an asterisk next to the 5-10 values you consider most important. Write these below as your shortlist (some words might relate to each other as one value).

Step 3 — Prioritise your top 10 from most important to least important (optional). This will give you a clearer sense of what is really important to you. This is not easy and will take time (outside of this module). You can refine it and update it from time to time when necessary.

Abundance	Creativity	Forgiveness	Modesty	Self-control
Acceptance	Credibility	Freedom	Motivation	Selflessness
Accuracy	Curiosity	Friendliness	Neatness	Self-reliance
Achievement	Daring	Friendship	Nerve	Sensitivity
Activeness	Decisiveness	Frugality	Obedience	Service
Adaptability	Dependability	Fun	Open-mindedness	Sharing
Adventure	Depth	Generosity	Optimism	Significance
Affection	Desire	Grace	Order	Silence
Affluence	Determination	Gratitude	Organisation	Simplicity
Agility	Dignity	Gregariousness	Originality	Sincerity
Alertness	Diligence	Growth	Patience	Skillfulness
Ambition	Direction	Guidance	Passion	Solidarity
Amusement	Discipline	Happiness	Peace	Solitude
Appreciation	Discovery	Harmony	Perceptiveness	Spirit
Approachability	Diversity	Health	Perfection	Spirituality
Assertiveness	Drive	Helpfulness	Perseverance	Spontaneity
Attractiveness	Dynamism	Holiness	Persuasiveness	Stability
Availability	Eagerness	Honesty	Pleasure	Strength
Awareness	Economy	Honour	Poise	Structure
Balance	Education	Hope	Popularity	Success
Beauty	Effectiveness	Hospitality	Power	Support
Being the best	Efficiency	Humility	Practicality	Survival
Belonging	Elegance	Humour	Pragmatism	Sympathy
Boldness	Empathy	Hygiene	Precision	Synergy
Bravery	Empowerment	Imagination	Preparedness	Teamwork
Brilliance	Encouragement	Impact	Presence	Thankfulness
Calmness	Endurance	Impartiality	Privacy	Thoroughness
Camaraderie	Energy	Independence	Proactive	Thoughtfulness
Candour	Enjoyment	Influence	Productivity	Thrift
Care	Entertainment	Ingenuity	Progress	Tidiness
Certainty	Enthusiasm	Innovation	Professionalism	Timeliness
Challenge	Excellence	Inquisitive	Prosperity	Traditionalism
Charity	Excitement	Insightful	Punctuality	Tranquility
Charm	Exhilaration	Inspiration	Quality	Trust
Cheerfulness	Expectancy	Integrity	Reasonableness	Trustworthiness
Clarity	Experience	Intelligence	Recognition	Truth
Cleverness	Expertise	Intimacy	Recreation	Understanding
Closeness	Exploration	Introversion	Refinement	Uniqueness
Comfort	Extravagance	Intuition	Reflection	Unity
Commitment	Extroversion	Joy	Relaxation	Usefulness
Community	Fairness	Justice	Reliability	Variety
Compassion	Faith	Keenness	Resilience	Victory
Competence	Fame	Kindness	Resolution	Virtue
Composure	Family	Knowledge	Resourcefulness	Vision
Confidence	Fashion	Leadership	Respect	Vitality
Conformity	Fearlessness	Learning	Rest	Warmth
Connection	Ferocity	Liberty	Restraint	Wealth
Consistency	Fidelity	Longevity	Reverence	Wholeness
Contentment	Financial	Logic	Richness	Willingness
Continuity	independence	Love	Rigor	Winning
Control	Fitness	Loyalty	Risk-Taking	Wisdom
Cooperation	Flexibility	Mastery	Sacrifice	Wittiness
Cordiality	Fluency	Maturity	Safety	Wonder
Courage	Focus	Meekness	Satisfaction	Youthfulness
Courtesy	Fortitude	Mindfulness	Security	Zeal



The list of values you have from the above question is great. But are these really your values or are they values you simply want to have? Maybe some are ideals that you hope to reach someday? True values are those that reliably and consistently shape our actions and priorities. So how well do you live up to the values you have claimed above? Put them to the 'reality check' test by self-reflecting or even better, asking someone who knows you very well to share what they observe you really value.

What do you talk most regularly about? What do you pray most regularly about? What concerns you?

What is it that you really care about? Why?

How do you fill your personal space? What objects do you hold dear? What do they represent in terms of your values?

How do you spend most of your time? What does that reveal about what you really value?

What are you most passionate and concerned about? What do you stand for? What do you believe in? What are you discontented about? Why?

What is the change or difference you are most trying to make? What do you want for your life, for your team, your community or organisation?

What do your answers reveal about what you value?

Compare and Contrast

If you are very clear on your values and your day-to-day life is well aligned to those values, you will find that the things high on your prioritised list of values are the same things that you talk about, fill your space and time with, are passionate and concerned about and are what you're working towards changing. While the exact words might not be the same, you should be able to see strong and direct links between your answers. If there is some discrepancy or maybe some things that just don't seem to line-up you might need to re-evaluate your values

Above all, prayerfully discern if what you really value is most important and what you are longing for is aligned with God's design and intent for you. That critical step is where this module leads.

What values are reflected both on the lists you created in both Part One and Part Two of the activity above? What values are missing from one or both lists?

Write a values statement incorporating what you now feel are your top three to five values. Your value statement is a sentence or two saying how and why these values are important to you and how they affect you and others you come in contact with.



3.4 YOUR IDENTITY STATEMENT

Both a values and identity statement can be helpful ways to reflect how God has made you as His workmanship. This involves, the “way you walk with Jesus” (Eph 2:10) and who you are becoming. It is a way of life that God calls us, to follow Jesus. This life is far more than a to-do list of aligned actions which is why an identity statement can be helpful for capturing a fuller image of the person you are becoming in Christ.

Your identity statement is a metaphor (picture or image) that captures who you are in the roles and relationships you hold in the world. It is something more core to your identity than a list of goals or a position description. Ask God to give you an image that might describe more of who you are, what your identity in God’s story is.

I am like.... (try drawing your identity statement)

3.5 DISCERNING OUR THINKING & LONGINGS



Exploring our values has helped us to recognise parts of our life that we might want to invite God to re-align. Now we are going deeper by examining our thinking and longings which means we can explore what really motivates us and therefore unpack why we may need to take action. This is necessary before attempting, in Modules 5 and 6, to align how we take action with God's intent for us and who we are becoming.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)

Invite God to search your heart as you reflect on the questions below.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE?

"To be human is to have a heart. You can't not love. So the question isn't whether you will love something as ultimate; the question is what you will love as ultimate. And you are what you love." ²

What are your ultimate love(s)? How does that shape your daily life and habits?

WHAT ARE YOU LONGING FOR?

There is a long history of people wanting to make a name for themselves (see Gen 11:4 for the story of Babel). "To make a name" in the language of the Bible is to construct an identity for ourselves to maximise power and glory. We either seek to make a name through what we can do for ourselves or we receive our name — our defining essence, security, worth and uniqueness — from what God has done for us.

Are you longing to make a name for yourself? In the very core of your being, what do you believe is more important — personal achievement or faithfulness? How is that reflected in your life?

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

Fear can have a significant impact on our habitual thinking and can also influence our values. Reflect on some of the habitual thinking and values you previously identified — what is motivating your pursuit of that value? Is it Christ's love or is it fear of something. Reflect on 1 John 4:18.

What fear might you invite God's perfect love to cast out?

ARE GOOD THINGS BECOMING IDOLS?

Competency in what we do is a good thing but as with all good things in life, we can easily make it into the most important thing — an idol that we worship as a counterfeit god.

"An idol is anything more important to you than God. Anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God. Anything you seek to give you what only God can give. Anything that is so central and essential to your life, that should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living". ³

Is there something/someone other than God that absorbs your heart so much that you feel if you were to have it then your life would be complete?

WHAT MOTIVATES AND DRIVES YOU?

For Christians, drive and desire is compelled by Christ's love because we no longer live for ourselves but for Christ (2 Cor 5:14-15). That is, to be continually in the rhythm of dying to your own interest and living for God.

Are you driven and compelled by Christ's love? What else compels you?

² Recommended reading — 'You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit' by James K.A. Smith (2016)

³ Recommended reading — 'Counterfeit Gods: When the Empty Promises of Love, Money and Power Let You Down' by Timothy Keller (2016)

3.6 NOW WHAT? ALIGNING OUR THINKING & LONGINGS – EPHESIANS 3:14-21

This has been a heavy module and it is important to remember that discipleship and formation are never a single moment—we need to continually calibrate our hearts and lives with who God is shaping us to be. So even if you feel right now that your thinking and longings are not as God intends just remember that Jesus has an invitation for you, an invitation to a life lived discovering ways we can follow Him. Hear Jesus' call to rest in Matthew:

*"Come to me all you who are weary and heavy burdened and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me" Matthew 11:28-30 NIV*

Our thoughts and longings can only be aligned with God's purposes by us coming to Him and following Jesus. This is how our values, beliefs and motivations truly get shaped. The life God intends for us follows on from this and shapes our priorities and practices of rest, renewal, love and service, as we will explore in Module 5.

Based on your reflections to the questions in the previous section, how might you need to align your thinking and longings with God's? As you seek to understand this, come to Jesus and be reminded that we come not out of guilt or condemnation but in response to Jesus' invitation to enter into the more purposeful way of life of resting in and learning from Him.

Consider someone you can talk with who might support and encourage you to align your thinking and longing with God's desire and purpose. Above all, pray!

Prayerfully read Ephesians 3:14-21.

Sit quietly and reflect on the prayer you have just read and how it speaks into what you have discovered in this module. Invite God to align who you are becoming with His purpose. Regardless of how tough your circumstances or context is may you be:

Strengthened with power — so that Christ may dwell in your heart,
Experience His love,
Grow in spiritual maturity.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen"
Ephesians 3:20-21 NIV

MODULE FOUR: CONTEXT – WHERE HAS GOD HAS PLACED US

4.1 UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT

We have started the process of discerning God's story and our place in it but that is only part of the Purpose Discovery journey. We also need to discern how we can participate in God's work of redemption and renewal. Remember that a key strand of God's purpose from Ephesians 1:10 is to bring all things under Christ. To do this we first need to understand the context where God has placed us and seek to discern what God's desire and design is for those contexts.



God's purpose for us does not stop with what He has done for us or what He does in us but is continually worked out in what He does through us, in serving others. We will never find a truer sense of purpose unless our purpose is other-centered. Take a moment to reflect on the life and ministry of Jesus and how other-centered He was in fulfilling God's purposes on the earth. God's purpose is always worked out in the service of others in the particular contexts where God has placed us.

In this module we will explore how God is already using you to bring about His story in your current context and how your different roles might reflect God's purposes. We will analyse and gain clarity on your current roles and responsibilities. This will set a foundation for discerning how God might be inviting you to imagine and participate in change that aligns with His design and intention for your current context.

4.2 ROLES WE HOLD IN THE CONTEXT GOD HAS PLACED US

Getting clarity about the context you are already in and the different roles you play is a very important step to discovering your purpose. We focus on roles because they are the places where you relate to God's world and you live out your God-given purpose. They are the places where you engage with your context.

Below is an exercise designed to help you unpack the roles you currently hold and highlight the people you serve within each of those roles. Fill in only columns 1 and 2 (we'll come to column 3 soon) by listing the Roles you currently hold- e.g. Sister/Student/Daughter/Soccer Coach etc. and in column 2 write down who you serve in these roles - e.g. Parents/Family/Boss/Staff/Team etc.

CURRENT REALITY	ROLES	PEOPLE	GOD'S WORK

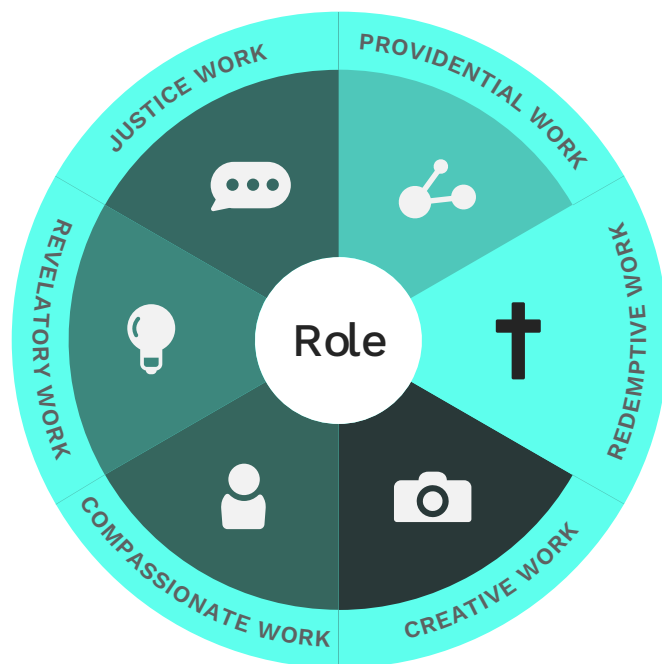
4.3 MY ROLES AND GOD'S PURPOSES

Our goal through this module is to understand how we can live out our God-given purpose and identity in the contexts where we are placed. In order to do that, we must first understand the ways that our own work connects with God's work in the world. What we do on a day-to-day basis is deeply connected to the purposes of God. Human beings are made in the image of God. Human labour has intrinsic value because in it we "image", or reflect, our Creator.

Robert Banks outlines 6 aspects of God's work that intersect with our work.⁴ See the diagram and explanation below.

"Few Christians see their daily work as directly connected to the calling and purposes of God. Those who do see a relationship often have only a partial awareness of the way the two are linked."

Each strand of Banks' theory on God's work is reflective of the character of God. In all these various ways, God the Father continues his creative, sustaining, and redeeming work through our human labour. This can give all our work great dignity and purpose. Vocational stewardship starts with celebrating the work itself and recognising that God cares about it and is accomplishing his purposes through it.



PROVIDENTIAL WORK (GOD'S PROVISION FOR SUSTAINING HUMANS AND CREATION)

"The work of divine providence includes all that God does to maintain the universe and human life in orderly and beneficial fashion. This includes conserving, sustaining and replenishing."

Providential work is the framework of our society. It's work that keeps us moving forward for without it society would stop functioning. Providential work is about seeing to the needs that affect all. From the garbage collector through to the electricity provider to the cleaner of your office building, these roles play a significant role in keeping things going. We see this also in the entrepreneur who, by starting a new business, creates jobs.

REDEPTIVE WORK (GOD'S SAVING AND RECONCILING ACTIONS)

"God's saving activity rightly has priority in any discussion of divine work. Everything God does revolves around this."

At the centre of everything is God's Redemptive work in the world. Humans participate in this kind of work, for example, as evangelists, pastors, counsellors, and peacemakers. We incorrectly assume that one must receive a divine calling to God's redemptive work. It includes anyone (whether film makers, poets, social workers or parents) working to help people turn in repentance and faith to Jesus and be reconciled with God, as well as those working to bring reconciliation and restoration in human relationships and broader society

CREATIVE WORK (GOD'S FASHIONING OF THE PHYSICAL AND HUMAN WORLD)

"Though we are not able to create something completely out of nothing, we are able to imitate God in this respect. Our creative work is possible because God has planted within us the capacity to create."

God gives humans creativity. People in the arts (sculptors, actors, painters, musicians, poets, and so on) display this, as do a wide range of craftspeople such as potters, weavers, and seamstresses, as well as interior designers, metalworkers, carpenters, builders, fashion designers, architects, novelists, and urban planners (and more). Banks writes "Any occupation or activity that has a touch of originality about it reflects something of God's creative work."

⁴ All quotes on next 2 pages are from Robert Banks (1999), Faith goes to work: Reflections from the Marketplace (Wipf & Stock Publishers)



COMPASSIONATE WORK

(GOD'S INVOLVEMENT IN COMFORTING, HEALING, GUIDING AND SHEPHERDING)

"In linking God's activity here with its human counterpart, one thinks immediately of the helping professions"

Compassionate work will bring to mind professions such as nurses, doctors, paramedics, therapists etc. These professions capture the compassionate heart of God in helping those who are unable to help themselves. This area of work also includes those who perform such tasks on a part-time, casual or volunteer basis.



REVELATORY WORK

(GOD'S WORK TO ENLIGHTEN WITH TRUTH)

"This is a fundamental dimension of God's work, without which we would not know anything about what God has done."

Revelatory work describes the occupations where wisdom and enlightenment are provided, disclosing what was previously unknown. The obvious professions that fall in this category are teachers and preachers, but the same can be said of writers, journalists, parents etc. or any profession where wisdom or knowledge is passed from one to another. This work might be broad in scope (general revelation) or specifically communicating the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.



JUSTICE WORK

(GOD'S MAINTENANCE OF JUSTICE)

"Though God's justice goes beyond giving people their fair and equal redress or due, and though human justice constantly fails to live up to this standard, there is valid connection between the two."

Justice work seeks to provide justice in the world. This is anything from lawyers and judges to activists. It can apply in some sense to almost any role, as we see and experience the brokenness that injustice brings in all sectors of society. It applies particularly to roles where people seek to avoid discrimination and take action towards a more equal and fair way of living.

REFLECTION

Return to the table you completed of your roles and people you currently serve. Try to identify where each of your current roles fits into the 6 aspects of God's work (note that some of your roles might reflect 2 or more aspects of God's work!)

What have you noticed about the roles you currently hold in light of the 6 types of God's work?

Does viewing your different roles through the lens of different aspects of God's work help you get any clarity of purpose? Why/why not?

4.4 LIVING A LIFE WORTHY OF THE CALLING IN THE CONTEXT GOD HAS PLACED US – EPHESIANS 4:1-16

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

In Ephesians 4:1 we are urged to “live a life worthy of the calling” and purpose God has given us. “Worthy” means “deserving” or in equal weight to and is used to describe things as evenly balanced. Consider all that you have just discovered in Ephesians 1-3 about what Christ has achieved. Now consider what it would look like to walk — in equal weight — in a way that honours all you have received. This is the “becoming” element of your life. Not in the sense of earning it but rather acknowledging it as a reality through what Jesus has done, then reflecting and embodying it in your habits, actions and relationships in the context where God has placed us.

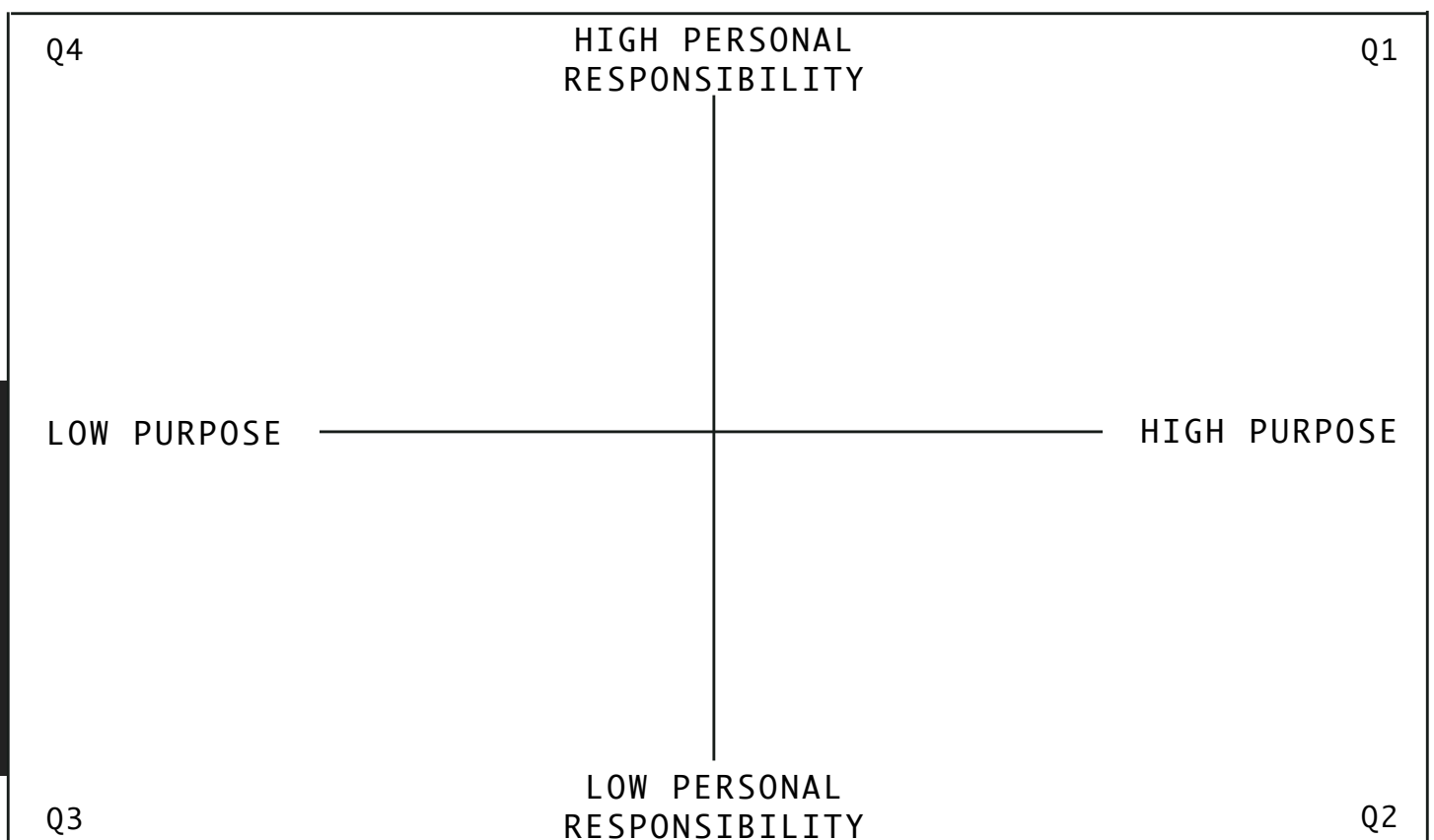
We seek to live out this calling both individually and collectively, in a particular time and place, using the specific gifts God has given to us in his grace (4:1-12), until we all reach maturity in Christ (4:13-16). Faithfully living into and up to our new God given identity requires discerning where God has placed and called us, including clarifying our context and exploring our gifts, roles and responsibilities. The remainder of the Purpose Discovery course will be exploring each of these aspects of our life. Before we do, take a moment to reflect on this key question:

How might you “live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (Ephesians 4:1) in the context where God has placed you?

4.5 UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLES/ RESPONSIBILITIES & PURPOSE

Now that you have reflected on the ways your current roles might align with God’s work and purpose, this activity will help you consider the whole of your life and discern how well you prioritise these roles in light of God’s purposes. Plot each of your roles (from 4.2) according to where they sit on the axes of:

Personal Responsibility. This refers to the extent to which this role/ part of your life falls apart if you are not involved in it (or the extent other aspects of your life fall apart if you step out of that role).
Purpose. This is the extent to which a particular role/part of your life enables you to be aligned (thinking/acting/creating) with God’s purpose within your unique identity and context.



HIGH PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Q4- UNALIGNED

How can you align this role with your purpose? Maybe you need to change your perspective. If you can't, bigger decisions are needed—but since your personal responsibility is high, prayerful discernment is needed!

Q1- CORE

These roles align deeply with who God has created you to be. You feel high personal responsibility—these roles might come with stress and suffering but there is no need to question involvement—a change of perspective might help.

LOW PURPOSE

Q3- RECONSIDER/REFRAME

These are the first roles you should question — are they purely self indulgent or is it self care? Either reconsider your involvement in this role or reframe what continuing in this role might enable—maybe it belongs in Q2?

HIGH PURPOSE

Q2- PLAY

Just because this role might have lower responsibility (and stress) doesn't make it less significant. These purposeful roles are often experienced in Christian community and through sacrificial, joyful service to others.

LOW PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The ultimate goal is to bring all of your life into greater alignment with God's purpose by shifting your roles into Q1 (Core) and Q2 (Play) over time. Roles that exist within the Q1 (Core) and Q2 (Play) Quadrants may slide between the two quadrants—they remain high purpose but your level of personal responsibility might vary according to the season you are in.

It is important to note that roles in Q1 (Core) will often be challenging or difficult, sometimes even involving significant suffering. If you are thinking that living in this Quadrant of purpose will make life easy then we suggest you need to change your perspective. God never indicates in the Bible that life following Jesus will be easy. In fact, suffering and trials will inevitably be part of life. Remember, what we are seeking through this process is not an easy or carefree life, but a 'purposeful' life. If we can focus our lives around roles that have a high connection to purpose, this connection to God's story will help sustain us through difficult times. Our experience is that you will likely remain highly engaged and motivated in these roles because of the clear sense of meaning and connection with purpose.

Roles within Q3 (Reconsider or reframe) tend to be self-focused, with a fine line between self-indulgent and self-care. It's important to review these roles and assess whether or not they actually do align with your purpose, if so, they should transition to Q2. If, however, they are purely self-serving and unaligned with purpose then you may need to consider moving them off the graph (i.e. getting yourself out of this role).

Roles within Q4 (Unaligned) will be the hardest to transition or change because of the deep sense of Personal Responsibility. However, if you have roles within this Quadrant, we encourage you to take some time to prayerfully assess whether you should be in these roles.

REFLECTION

Does this accurately reflect how you feel about your different roles?

What needs to change (e.g. do roles need to move quadrants or be reconsidered altogether)? Why?

Are there any changes you can make now to bring a specific role into greater alignment to the future which God is leading you into? What potential action could you take?

4.6 AN IMAGINED FUTURE

"Christians are people whose roots are in the future. Our branches are in the present, but our roots are in the future."

John Zizioulas

If you are truly seeking to be shaped by God's story, then each time you engage your imagination, you are learning to see your context as God sees it, as God intends it to be. We are not seeking to lock in a concrete future that we must achieve. The point of this exercise is not so that you have a road map for where you will be in 5-10 years. The future has an almost endless variety of possibilities that could be congruent with your purpose. The point of using your imagination in this way is not to lock in goals for the future, it is to open yourself up to future possibilities and good work (even outside your current roles/context) that God might be preparing you for.

Once you are aware of how and where God might be leading you in the future, you can begin to embody who He has made you to be, guided toward faithful and fruitful decisions in the present, and bring about change in your current context now. Learning to imagine in line with God's intent is a powerful force to help you see what might need to change now. When we lose the ability to imagine, we get stuck in the way things are.

Prayerfully imagine your life and what your roles/context might look like in 10 years from now. What would your life look like if it was more aligned with what God intends?

Capture a snapshot of what could be. Ideally in pictures. The preference is that you draw, because it engages the imaginative parts of the brain and allows broader thinking, but there are no rules.

Consider the following questions:

Who is there?

Where are you?

What change has been achieved? Who has achieved it and how has it been achieved?

How are the people you are serving feeling?

What are the people you are serving saying?



4.7 NOW WHAT? PRAY 'WHO WILL I SERVE?'

Spend some time prayerfully reflecting on your roles, people you might be serving and God's work you might be involved with in the imagined future. Based on this imagined future, fill out the 'Who will you serve?' table below.

IMAGINED FUTURE	ROLES	PEOPLE	GOD'S WORK

REFLECTION

Identify the difference between your roles in your current context and the imagined future context. Is there alignment between where you are and what you are doing now in your current context and what you sense might be God's design and intent for your future context?

Is it the same people (individuals or groups) in a similar context and type of God's work as you currently serve?

Or are there other people (individuals or groups) that you feel God might be leading you to serve that are outside your current context?

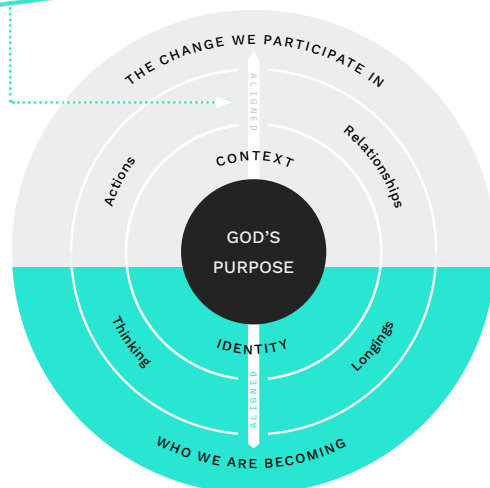
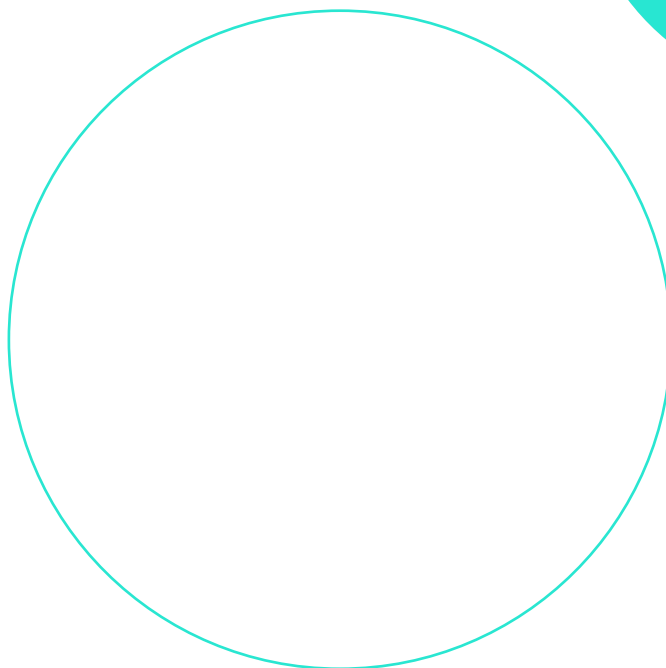
Are there other types of God's work you might be involved with?

In Module 5 and 6, we will consider what to do about any differences you may have noticed between the roles, people and types of God's work you are in now and where you are discerning the context where God might place you in the future. You might have some decisions to make to align your life and the change you hope to participate in to that imagined future, or you might be feeling affirmed that your current context is aligned with your imagined future. We'll also look at what to do to build on this with humble confidence.

MODULE FIVE: ALIGNING: WHO GOD HAS MADE US TO BE IN THE CONTEXT HE HAS PLACED US

5.1 UNDERSTANDING ALIGNMENT

Use this circle to visually represent the approximate percentage of time you spend in your different roles in an average week (make sure you allow at least ¼ of your time for sleep!)



Often when we ask the question of purpose our focus is on what we do (e.g., our roles). While what we do and how we spend our time is important, God cares deeply about faithfulness. God isn't just interested in what you do, He's also interested in how you do what you do. Are you participating in God's work in a manner that is aligned to His purposes?

As we continue to discern how we can participate in God's work of redemption and renewal in the context where God has placed us, we turn now to explore how we can begin to align our everyday actions and relationships with our vision for the future.

In Ephesians 4 and 5, Paul urges his readers to grow up in every way to align who God has made them to be in the context God has placed them—to "live a life worthy of the calling we have received" (Eph 4:1) and to "live as children of the light and find out what pleases the Lord" (Eph 5:8-10). In this module we will explore how we might live this way, shaping our priorities and developing practices and rhythms that bring our actions and relationships into greater alignment with who we are becoming in Christ.

5.2 ALIGNING IDENTITY & CONTEXT WITH GOD'S PURPOSE

"Most of us feel a frustration, a disconnect, that the parts of our life don't make sense in terms of the greater meaning and purpose we want to have for our life. We should be making a difference in the world but that is not always the reality we experience." - John Beckett, Seed Founder

Can you relate to this feeling of frustration? Why/Why not?

Do you feel you are living in that sweet spot of having your life aligned with who God has created you to be?

What challenges do you face in aligning your life with God's purpose and story in the context where He has placed you?

5.3 MADE NEW TO ALIGN WITH GOD'S PURPOSE – EPHESIANS 4:17-24

Read Ephesians 4:17-24 (& Col 3:5-14).

Paul explains 3 critical steps to ensure our lives align with God's purpose.

1. "Put off your old self" (Eph 4:22, see also Col 3:5-9)
2. "To be made new in the attitude of your minds" (Eph 4:23, see also Romans 12:1-2)
3. "Put on the new self, created to be like God" (Eph 4:24, see also Col 3:10, 12)

Aligning our life with God's purpose is not as simple or superficial as putting off old behaviours and trying to change them by putting on new behaviours—that is a recipe for exhaustion and discouragement. We do not make ourselves new and nor do we transform ourselves but rather we invite God's power to shape us and form us when we follow Jesus into a full life. That's why it says in verse 23 that we are to "be made new", or as Romans 12:2 puts it, "be transformed".

It is only when we come to Jesus that we are truly aligned with God's purposes, for it is only through Jesus that we have our identity, our thinking and longings, our context, actions and relationships, remade by him. Getting practical by exploring our daily priorities and actions is one way we can continue the process of aligning with God's purposes.

5.4 PUTTING THE BIG ROCKS FIRST

In the last module we considered the big picture context of how to bring your roles into greater alignment with God's purpose. Now, let's get more specific and practical — what might it look like to bring our daily priorities and actions into greater alignment with God's purpose?

As we look more closely at this area of our lives, it is important to remember that it is by grace, through faith, that we now walk in a new way in the world — "a way of love" (Eph 5:1). Part of our purpose is to faithfully seek to embody this new reality that we have been transformed, and as dearly loved children, we do this simply by learning, following and imitating the example of the leaders of our family:

"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" Ephesians 5:1 NIV

When we allow the Spirit to align our thinking, longings, actions, and relationships we follow Jesus and "walk in the way of love". Seeking to live as children of the light involves finding out what pleases the Lord (Eph 5:8-10) and being careful about how we live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity (Eph 5:15-16). This includes putting "the big rocks first", identifying what day-to-day priorities and practices will best help align our lives with God's purpose.

Read Ephesians 5:8-20

How do you find out what pleases the Lord? (Eph 5:8-10)

What does it mean to be "wise, making the most of every opportunity"? (Eph 5:15-17)

Do you think your priorities (big rocks) align with God's purpose for your life? Why/why not?

5.5 FOCUS QUESTIONS TO ALIGN YOUR PRIORITIES & ROLES WITH GOD'S PURPOSES

In Ephesians 6:5-9 (and Col 3:22-4:1), Paul invites us to do the will of God by serving “wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people” (Eph 6:7). In other words, we’re invited to serve just “an audience of one”, and even when we’re serving others it is as though we are serving God. The challenge here is to align your life so that you can wholeheartedly serve God (Col 3:23).

We need to make sure that our heart (our thinking and longings) and whatever we do (our actions and relationships) are truly aligned with God’s purpose and are fixed on serving “an audience of one”. But how do we do that?

It can be helpful to explore alignment by crafting some focus questions. When we turn reflections into questions, we:

Open ourselves up to the possibility of finding solutions;
and, develop the clarity we need to make changes in our lives

First, think of an area of your life that you are currently finding some degree of alignment challenge and would like to realign to be able to more wholeheartedly serve God. As you think about areas of your life that aren’t aligned, you can consider the broader roles, relationship and responsibilities you have. Or you might notice alignment challenges in more specific areas such as in your priorities or practices. Write down a few to help until you identify what is the most significant alignment challenge for you right now.

Now try to rephrase this challenge as a question or a series of “How can I...” style questions. Then try to rewrite your questions a couple more times to dig deeper and develop more specific possibilities.

This template might help: **How can I address this [challenge] so that [desired outcome]?**

Here is an example of digging deeper into a question:

How can I address my lack of motivation so that I can serve God more wholeheartedly through my role as a council worker?

How can I address my disconnection with my role as a council worker so that I can see my role as a partnership with God in sustaining His creation?

How can I address my limited understanding of what God’s sustaining work looks like, so that I can participate in sustaining His creation?

Each version of a focus question opens up further possibilities and helps develop a sense of clarity about what positive action we can take to bring our lives into greater alignment with God’s purpose.

Remember: focus on staying curious and do not seek the answers, just seek to clarify the right questions to be asking (answers or action steps will come after you have explored what questions to ask).

FOCUS QUESTION ONE

FOCUS QUESTION TWO





FOCUS QUESTION THREE

You can keep asking more focus questions to explore possibilities and develop a sense of clarity about what the alignment challenge really is. Once you feel you have some clear questions, prayerfully reflect on potential solutions. What potential action could you take that might help you bring this challenge into greater alignment with God's purpose?

5.6 BUT WHAT IS IT THAT YOU SEEK?

The focus question(s) we have just identified can help to highlight some of the core tensions or areas of our life that we are longing to align more fully with God's purposes. But we can't just leave it there. The next step is to prayerfully reflect on whether what we're seeking is aligned with God's purpose. To quote Richard Carter:

"What do you seek? At the beginning of any call to Christian community, this is the most searching of questions. Seeking is not about simply abandoning, rather it is about discovering. All of us will have a long list of things that we might dream of leaving behind: loneliness, stress, overeating, resentment, greed, jealousy, alienation from the lifestyles we live, relationships that have gone wrong and now fester within: it will not need much imagination to add to the list of the things that weigh you down. But what is it that you seek?"

Relook at your focus questions. There are two possible ways you can respond. First, identify the things that you dream of leaving behind, things that are holding you back from becoming who God has made you to be and participating in God's work of change in the context where He has placed you.

Take a moment to pray and lay these things before God and ask, in His love and grace, to show you how you might step away from these practices.

Second, reflect more deeply on your focus question(s). What is it that you seek? Do you feel that it is aligned with God's purposes?

Prayerfully lay these things before God and ask Him to guide your thinking and longings, to renew your mind and align your heart.



5.7 NOW WHAT? REFORMING OUR RHYTHMS & PRACTICES TO ALIGN WITH GOD'S PURPOSE

Now you have identified what you want to leave behind and what you're seeking, let's step into the possibility of new ways to follow Jesus.'

The noun disciple comes from the Latin word discipulus, which means "student, learner, or follower." Being a disciple of Jesus means we are his student, learner and follower. To learn from and follow Jesus daily involves adopting practices that can develop consistent rhythms. These daily rhythms then shape our thinking, longings, actions and relationships and bring us into a deeper alignment with God.

Research indicates that how you learn is how you live. Your preferred learning style can also influence how you follow Jesus. Adopting spiritual practices that resonate with your preferred learning style can enhance your experience as a student of Jesus. Similarly, research suggests that blending different styles is often the most effective learning strategy. By knowing which styles are outside of your comfort zone, you can experiment with practices that may both challenge you and help you avoid getting stuck in a rut.



STEP 1 — Try to identify which learning styles you prefer and which ones challenge you

Read about the learning styles below and try to find at least one style that you prefer and one that is more challenging for you.

LEARNING STYLES

VERBAL



You have a passion for words, writing, rhymes and you like reciting information and highlighting key points in notes.

PHYSICAL



You learn by using your body and a sense of touch. You are comfortable with doing, touching, moving, building. You are 'hands on'.

LOGICAL



You learn by asking lots of questions. You want to understand the whole picture. You naturally learn by classifying, categorising, and thinking about patterns and relationships.

AURAL



You develop understanding by hearing and listening. Learning involves using sound and music. You prefer spoken instructions rather than reading.

VISUAL



You find that you learn better by reading and looking at pictures diagrams and graphs. You use symbols, boxes, colours in your notes.

SOCIAL



You prefer to learn in groups and you like generating ideas by brainstorming with others. You enjoy group activities over working alone.

SOLITARY



You prefer more independent and introspective learning. Spending time on your own, keeping a journal and self analysing to gain a deeper understanding of yourself.



STEP 1 — Choose some spiritual practices to adopt

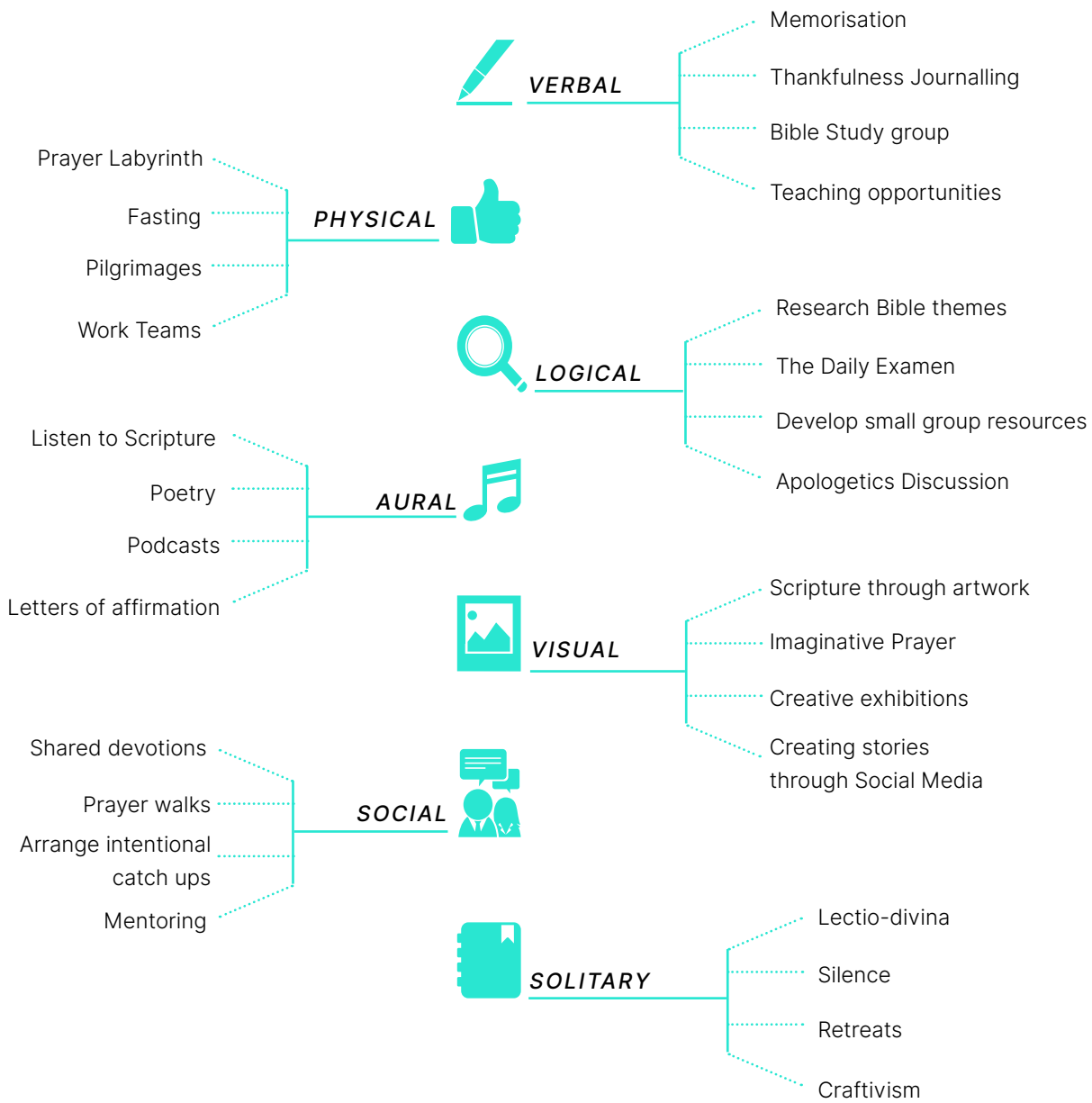
Now that you have thought about which learning style most suits you, you can then reflect on certain practices that may be helpful for you.

We believe at the core of all Christian maturity we must engage with prayer, scripture, communities of faith and service. Keep in mind that how we encounter each of those core elements will differ depending on your learning style. The list provided below is not exhaustive but includes some examples to help you explore practices that are aligned with who God has made you to be.

We encourage you to also try adopting practices that are outside your comfort zone. These may be practices aligned with a learning style that challenges you or may be practices that are significantly different to those that have been modelled to you early in your faith journey.

To help understand the list below, each learning style has an example of a possible practice you could research and try out and a short description explaining that practice. E.g. For Solitary the following might apply:

- Scripture – Lectio divina
- Prayer – Silence
- Community of faith – Retreats
- Service opportunities - Craftivism



See the list below for explanations of each of the above practices.

Understanding spiritual practices

Apologetic discussions: A way of communicating faith to skeptics and secular communities. Apologetics considers the relationship between theology and science, seeking to provide tools for defending the central claims of the Gospel. This is a practical process of engaging in discussions about faith.

Arrange intentional catch ups: “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” (Matt 18:20). Make a practice of intentionally catching up with one or more other people—be the church in small, intentional, weekly catch ups.

Bible Study Group: Commit to an active Bible study group that examines, explores, and discusses the Scriptures. Regularly contribute to these discussions, whether in a small group of 2 people or a larger group.

Fasting: By abstaining from food, hunger pains serve as a physical reminder of our dependence on God. Turn every sign of hunger into a meditation on God, to draw closer.

Craftivism: The intention is to make craft which causes people to stop and reflect but the act is also meditative. You may find a deeper connection with the heart of God, His heart for the world and His heart for justice.

Creating stories through social media: Social media can be a source of great encouragement and connection. Consider ways you can intentionally curate uplifting stories on your accounts that testify to God’s faithfulness and bring glory to God.

Creative exhibitions: Artistic expressions can draw us closer to God. If you create art, you may host community exhibitions to provide others an opportunity to reflect on the glory and goodness of God.

The Daily Examen: A prayerful technique for reflecting on the events of the day to recognise God’s presence and discern his direction for us. There are only five steps to follow the Daily Examen of St. Ignatius.

Develop small group resources: Practice designing and creating resources for small group Bible studies. This process can often deepen your own understanding of the Scriptures and enhance your relationship with God.

Imaginative Prayer: Founded on the principle that God created the human imagination for the purpose of drawing us closer to Him, start by inviting the Holy Spirit to use our imagination and then choosing a passage of Scripture, usually a Gospel story, and allow our imagination to supply details of the story including smells, feelings, sounds.

Lectio Divina: This contemplative reading of Scripture slows us down. By reading a short passage multiple times, listening, pondering, and praying, the Scripture begins to speak to us in a new way.

Letters of affirmation: Encouraging words are powerful. Make a regular practice of writing affirming letters to others. Identify what God is doing in others and give Him the glory for it as you affirm them.

Listen to Scripture: Bible apps have audio track capabilities. By listening to the word of God, the aural learner can enrich their understanding of Scripture.

Memorisation: This isn’t just a Sunday School practice. There is great power in memorising Scriptures (John 15:7). Choose some verses to start with and consider researching ways to enhance your memory as you practice memorising Scripture.

Mentoring: Practice discipleship by actively and intentionally mentoring younger Christians. Search for mentor role models in your own life to enhance your practice of discipleship.

Pilgrimages: Physically journey to a place of spiritual significance. This could be wandering with no destination in mind, or it could be a planned pilgrimage to a Holy Site. Either way, deepen your connection to God by journeying spiritually as you journey physically.

Podcasts: Make a regular practice of listening to faith-based podcasts. Try sermons for deep theological thinking, interviews for faith-raising testimonies and Christian leadership podcasts for developing your God-given skills.

Poetry: Poetry adds rich language to your prayer life. Start with some Psalms, pray the poems you find there and then research contemporary poets who are writing beautiful poems to God.

Prayer Labyrinth: Walking a labyrinth is a form of prayer walk. As we draw closer to God, the centre of everything in our lives, it can be helpful to physically represent that by walking the winding path to the centre of a labyrinth. Take time at the start to ask a question, prayerfully surrender a situation, or focus your intentions on drawing closer to God.

Prayer walks: Organise a group to regularly walk in your region. Pray together for the area, the inhabitants, the future generations, the political leaders, and economic powers of the area where you are walking.

Research Bible Themes: Choose a key theme of the Scriptures and commit time to unravelling the thread of that theme throughout the Bible, find cross references that speak to the theme and learn more of God's nature and character.

Retreats: Organise retreats with others to collectively practice sabbatical rest, Biblical teaching and fellowship. Spend time alone, together, and draw closer to God as a community.

Scripture through artwork: Celebrate the Bible through creatively illustrating verses, colouring in the artworks of others, or creating new pieces of art. This is a great way to memorise and meditate on Scripture.

Shared devotions: Using a Bible app or published materials choose a devotion to work through with someone else to enrich your quiet time with God.

Silence: Intentionally quiet yourself and your immediate vicinity and adopt an attitude of prayer. Silence can be practiced as a prelude to prayer or as its own activity.

Teaching opportunities: You might find opportunities to teach the word of God in your context, or you may be preparing for future opportunities. Either way, by teaching the word of God, whether to others or to yourself, you will enhance your understanding of Scripture.

Thankfulness journaling: This is gratitude journaling but focused on God's goodness and provision. Write down, daily, the things you are thankful for and spend time thanking God for these things in your life.

Work teams: Service through practical acts are a powerful way of drawing closer to God. When we serve others through practical means, we are literally being the hands and feet of Jesus.

Remember that to learn from and follow Jesus daily involves adopting practices that can develop consistent rhythms. List any new spiritual practices you want to explore more to develop consistent rhythms. Or list any practices that you feel affirmed to continue.

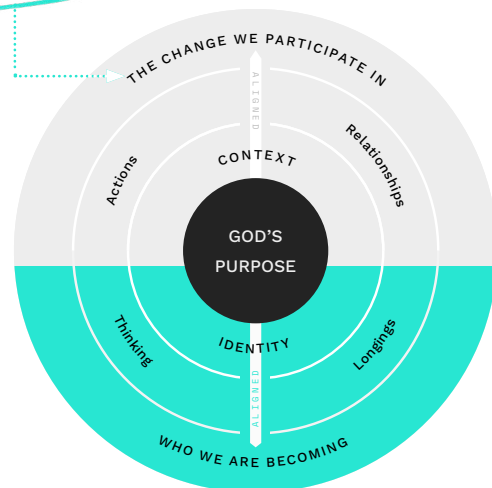
MODULE SIX: PARTICIPATING – CHANGE THAT ALIGNS WITH GOD’S PURPOSE

6.1 ALIGNING THE CHANGE WE PARTICIPATE IN WITH GOD’S PURPOSE

God’s story of redemption and renewal includes us as human beings, but it is a much bigger story. God is concerned for all of creation. We have already seen this in Ephesians 1:10 where Paul explains that God’s will is to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under Christ. God’s work of redemption and renewal doesn’t end with us.

At Seed we use the term, redemptive changemaker, to articulate and summarise the calling and purpose of God’s people. A redemptive changemaker is someone who is becoming who God created them to be while participating in God’s work of redemption and renewal in the context where God has placed them. Redemptive changemakers cultivate and create change that aligns with God’s purposes. We believe all God’s people are called to be redemptive changemakers.

The change that we might be seeking to participate in (through our actions and priorities, relationships and roles) is played out in the particular context where God has placed us. In this module you will consider specific types of redemptive change you might participate in. You will also consider potential resistances and responses. You will be sent out with humble confidence that God will give you the resources to be redemptive changemakers in the context where He has placed you.



6.2 TYPES OF REDEMPTIVE CHANGE

There are four potential levels where we can engage effectively as redemptive changemakers. These include: Personal, Relational, Structural and Cultural. Although we have agency to change things in our own lives, when we respond to the invitation to find our purpose in God’s story, we open ourselves up to the possibility of being agents for change in the lives of others. We may even bring positive change to the systems, structures and even sub-cultures that currently exist in the contexts where we serve.

What types of redemptive change do you feel God is inviting you to participate in within the context He has placed you?

PERSONAL

(changes that we can make to our own perspectives or actions – in our beliefs/attitudes, behaviours, confidence, knowledge, skills etc)

RELATIONAL

(changes that we make that affects the lives of individual/s that we are in direct contact with, such as family, a friend or customer)

STRUCTURAL

(changes to a policy, system, structure or relationship patterns that will impact many people’s lives)

CULTURAL

(changes in the way we understand things collectively, or the meaning/story we attribute to something that form the norms that guide the patterns of behaviour)

6.3 YOUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

A Purpose statement can be a powerful way to capture what you have discovered in this course. This Purpose Discovery course has sought to help you discern your place in God's story. You have explored who God has made you to be, the context where God has placed you and how to keep walking in the way of Jesus so that whatever action you take is aligned with God's purpose.

Your purpose statement integrates who you are (your identity statement) with who you serve and the change you seek to participate in. It is the foundational or summary statement of your Purpose Storyboard (that you started back in Module 2). Your purpose statement is worked out in the behaviours you embody and the action you take across a variety of contexts and roles. It gives you a sense of direction towards your imagined future (that you worked on in Module 4).⁵

Ephesians 2:10 provides both beautiful truth and a helpful 'template' for your identity/purpose statement:

*"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do" (NIV)*

A purpose statement can take the following format:

I am God's [my identity statement - who I am] created in Christ Jesus to [participate in the change amongst the people I seek to serve] which God prepared in advance for me to do.

Here are some examples of purpose statements:

I am God's gardener, created in Christ Jesus to create conditions for children and youth to flourish, which God prepared in advance for me to do.

I am God's ligament, created in Christ Jesus to connect different parts of the body and enable it to work together and be built up in love, which God has prepared in advance for me to do.

I am God's writer, created in Christ Jesus to creatively communicate truth that informs and inspires, which God has prepared in advance for me to do.

6.4 UNDERSTANDING RESISTANCE & RESPONSES – EPHESIANS 6:10-17

Ephesians 6 helps us be aware that when we participate in change that aligns with God's purpose, we can expect there to be resistance. The same passage also gives us a humble confidence that God will resource us for the work He invites us into. Whenever we experience that resistance, we can hear God's invitation and respond to his leading to stand firm and pray.

Read Ephesians 6:10-17

Where does our strength come from? (see 6:10)

What type of resistance does Paul say we should expect? (6:11-12)

In the face of this struggle and resistance, Paul repeatedly calls the Ephesians to stand (notice how it is repeated four times in verse 11-14). What does standing firm look like in your context?

In what ways does God's armour equip us for the change we seek to participate in?

6.5 PLANNING TO BE A REDEPTIVE CHANGE MAKER

Being a redemptive changemaker means we both imagine and actually seek to do something to participate in change that will glorify God in the context where He has placed us.

Here is a process to help you take steps to do exactly that.

1. In the table on the next page, use the first column to list the specific TYPES OF CHANGE that you feel God is inviting you to participate in within the context He has placed you (don't just write Personal, Relational, Structural or Cultural—be as specific as possible)

2. Next, try to identify what BARRIERS might be preventing you from seeing that change. These barriers might be:

Personal — internal barriers that might be within your own heart or life.

Relational — such as a boss who doesn't give you the responsibility you need to affect change.

Structural — such as a lawyer forced to overcharge clients who can't afford their services.

Cultural — such as the perceived value of busyness or doing too much.

3. Finally, use the ACTION/ RESPONSE column to identify specific responses you could make to overcome these barriers and enable the change to happen.

As you think about potential action and responses, it can be helpful to reflect again on the picture of God’s purpose for humanity that we find in Genesis 1:26-28, created in God’s image to be creators and cultivators. Andy Crouch challenges Christians to reflect this posture of being cultivators and creators:

*“I wonder what we Christians are known for in the world outside our churches. Are we known as critics, consumers, copiers, condemners of culture? I’m afraid so. Why aren’t we Christians known as cultivators — people who tend and nourish what is best in human culture, who do the hard and painstaking work to preserve the best of what people before us have done? Why aren’t we known as creators — people who dare to think and do something that has never been thought or done before, something that makes the world more welcoming and thrilling and beautiful?”*⁶

As you think about what type of change God is leading you to take, and the very real barriers you will face, prayerfully consider what your response/action will be. Are you called to:



- Cultivate?** Like a gardener, working to rearrange the raw material of God’s creation to help the world in general, and people in particular, thrive and flourish.⁷
- Create?** Like an artist, participating with God in His creativity to start something new.

PLANNING TO BE A REDEMPTIVE CHANGEMAKER

TYPES OF CHANGE	BARRIERS	ACTION/RESPONSES
What specific types of change (personal, relational, structural or cultural) is God putting on my heart to see in my context?	What personal, relational, structural or cultural barriers are preventing this change?	What will my response be to overcome these barriers and see a redemptive change? What might I specifically cultivate or create?

6 Crouch, Andy (2008), “Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling,” IVP Books, page 97-98. Genesis 1-2 is above all about the Creator’s creativity and humankind’s creativity made in God’s image-with a secondary emphasis on the role of cultivation in taking proper care of creation.

7 Keller, Timothy (2014), “Every Good Endeavour: Connecting Your Work to God’s Plan for the World.”

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6.6 GROW AS A REDEPTIVE CHANGEMAKER WITH SEED

Seed's foundational belief is that all God's people are called to be agents of redemptive change in whatever contexts God has placed them. Seed's purpose is to help grow Christian redemptive change-makers who engage effectively with society by:

Growing in your faith — as you align your own life with God-given purpose

Impacting your context — as you identify brokenness and present an alternative solution that brings your context into greater alignment with what God intends

Witnessing to Jesus — as you introduce people to Jesus and help them experience the way of Jesus

Being a redemptive changemaker is not easy. Considering the barriers you still face, you might benefit from more support, guidance, accountability and encouragement along your journey to make the changes you long to see actually happen.



To cultivate change in your context — If you are in a situation where the barrier is something that you don't currently have control over (i.e. it is an external barrier) then you may need to consider how you can cultivate change in your context. Sometimes this kind of change is relatively easy, sometimes it is extremely difficult. Despite what you may think, or how you may feel, it is very often possible. It may take a long time, and a whole lot of prayer, but change is possible. Seed has additional resources and courses to help you bring change to your context:

- **RE-IMAGINE** is a 1-week online design sprint (5 x 1 hour daily sessions) with a Seed Coach to help you discern what distinctive part you might play to make a difference for Jesus in the context where God has placed you right now.
- **MARKETPLACE** is for emerging marketplace leaders (25-40 years). It's a year-long formation and development process for those who want to grow deep in the way of Jesus while faithfully seeking to be a redemptive influence in their existing workplace, organisation or industry.



To create something new — One of the keys to a purposeful life is the daily quest to be faithful right where God has placed you. However, sometimes, after a period of prayer and discernment, the best path for someone who is finding it difficult to overcome the barriers they face in a current role is to consider stepping into something new. In some cases, that will mean a calling to a new context. In others, God may be calling you to create something new that disrupts your current context and offers a different possibility that is good for the same people you are trying to serve in your current role. If you believe God may be leading you in this direction, Seed is able to help you design and create a new initiative that is focused on bringing redemptive change through the Seed Incubator.

- **INCUBATOR** is for Entrepreneurs. It's a unique 6-month opportunity for those looking to establish or grow an initiative/business and design it in a way that it aligns with their God-given purpose and results in redemptive change in their context.

You can express your interest to find out more about these Seed courses via the post course survey.

What has been the most significant change for you as a result of this course?



Imagine you are doing a 30 second television or radio advertisement about this Purpose Discovery course, what would you say? (For example : before this course I was.... But now I am ...)

BEFORE THIS COURSE I...

BUT NOW I...

Our aim in this Purpose Discovery Course has been to help you get more clarity and confidence in your purpose. To help the team at Seed understand how this course has impacted you and how you would like to stay connected with Seed please answer the following questions at this QR Code or link: <https://www.seed.org.au/purpose-discovery-post-course-survey/>



6.7 SENDING OUT AS REDEPTIVE CHANGEMAKERS (EPHESIANS 6:18-20)

Read Ephesians 6:18-20

Paul was not shy to ask for prayer. Pray for each other and send each other to go back into your contexts. Our prayer is that you have developed a new level of clarity that will help you make some decisions about your life. We believe that a purposeful life leads to greater contentment personally and greater fruitfulness in your work. We also believe that God is glorified when we live a life aligned with God's purposes.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US ON THIS PURPOSE DISCOVERY COURSE.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!