

Following God

Following God is the surest way of experiencing a fantastic life. The idea of following God is the central and most basic theme contained throughout all of Scripture. If you follow the history of the people whose lives are captured in the Bible – especially the Nation of Israel – you will discover that they prospered whenever they genuinely followed God. And when they strayed from following God, they experienced suffering and loss. The books of the Old Testament – especially the prophets – are filled with examples of God calling His people to follow Him, and warning them of the unfortunate consequences they will experience if they fail to follow Him. When Jesus comes on the scene, He explicitly calls people to follow Him. The epistles that follow the “gospel books” (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) repeat that clarion call to follow Jesus and articulate many ways to respond to that call. Throughout the Bible, you will find hundreds of promises of blessings that accompany those who seek to follow God. **By God's design, the primary focus of life is for us to know and follow Him.**

So, what does it mean to follow God? How can I direct my life in that way? Questions like these should haunt you. We should make it the highest priority of our lives to find meaningful answers to the question of what it means to follow God. Our futures depend on the way we answer that question! A simple dictionary definition of what it means to follow is to “go or come after (a person or thing proceeding ahead); move or travel behind.”

Following God has two components. First, one must be aware of what they are called to follow. That is, you need to understand what God wants you to do. Second, following requires a willingness to do what is asked of you. To follow God, you must take the time to understand what He wants you to do. Then, you must humble yourself and do your best to comply. That simple process is the surest – and only – way to experience the “full” life God desires for you. Everything that follows in this book is designed to help you better understand what God is asking you to do and how you can grow in your capacity to both understand and obey God’s will for your life.

If you reflect on your own life, you will discover that most of your plans and goals have been related to the underlying motivation of experiencing the “full” life. However, most of us seek to fulfill this dream in ways that fail to give lasting and deeply satisfying results. Our problem is that we fail to understand many of the principles God put into place at the time of creation, which were designed to realize that underlying dream fully. ***In short, we have a faulty mental framework that needs to be modified.***

God designed life to be a journey of discovery, a pilgrimage to find meaning, purpose, and fulfillment. However, life is not about conforming to a fixed life plan designed for everyone to follow but for you to discover your unique life plan. ***God desires for you to take responsibility for your own life, to seek to understand Him***

and His ways, and to direct your life in those ways, which will lead you to experience a deep sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment!

Deep down, I believe you have always known that there is something exceptional that you are called to do with your life. You were not created to conform to other people's expectations and plans. You have been called to discover and pursue your unique life purpose. Indeed, we will find many similarities to other people, but many aspects of our lives will be unique to us. How, then, are we supposed to find our way? How do we discover the "right" and "wrong" ways of living? Is there a trustworthy source of assistance? Yes, there is! You can connect with that Divine Source – and find ***your way*** – as you work through the ideas and processes outlined in this book.

Sometimes, complicated ideas are better understood by the use of an analogy. While no analogy is perfect, I think our understanding of computers can aid us in our understanding of how God designed life to function. Each of us is like a uniquely designed personal computer. God is the designer of our "architecture," the programmer of the "operating system" upon which we are designed to run, and the power source necessary for us to live. Our soul (mind, will, and emotions) is the operating system by which our lives are driven, and each of our operating systems has been seriously infected by many viruses – some big, some small.

God acts like a software company in that He desires to regularly send "updates" (fixes) to our operating systems to help us function more effectively. While sin is the virus that is the source of all our problems, each of our operating systems (souls) has been infected in different ways and requires personally designed updates. The number of "fixes" we need is significant, and God typically sends them little by little (although sometimes a great "fix" can occur instantaneously). The Holy Spirit is the conduit through which we receive our regular updates, and our spirit (which comes to life when we are born again) is the part of our inner architecture by which we receive our needed updates. Each update that God so mercifully sends our way is designed to modify our operating system (soul) in ways that will help us function more effectively. ***The process functions optimally only if we are regularly and adequately "connected" with God.*** The purpose of this book is to assist you in understanding your responsibilities in the process of connecting with God in meaningful and productive ways.

I trust you are reading this book because you genuinely desire greater meaning, purpose, and fulfillment. That is not to say these attributes are totally absent; you just sense that you might be missing some vital piece(s) of the puzzle. That's why I wrote this book. There is nothing extraordinary about me except that God has "programmed" me to analyze life experiences, extract the underlying principles, and communicate them in understandable and practical ways. In short, I'm a teacher. And I'd like to walk you through a series of lessons that will both inform and empower you to find what you're really looking for in life. But I want you to understand that the process of change and growth is a ***journey***. There is no "silver bullet" that automatically produces the "full"

life all at once; your “dream life” will develop over time. But it would be best if you recognized that this is a journey you must take individually, and as you proceed, an ever-deepening sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment will unfold. Throughout this journey, you will discover many new truths, understandings, and practices – **a divinely inspired mental framework** – that will redefine and redirect your life in new and exciting ways! I want to assure you that you **can** make the changes that will help you experience the “full” life that Jesus desires for you. One important “**key**” to the process is revealed in Romans 12:2a (NASB): **“Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”**

It is difficult for us to realize how much our life experiences (“pattern of this world”) have contributed to our mental framework – the ways we think and many of our beliefs about life. We need to understand that there is a direct connection between our thinking and actions – including the goals and plans we set. The simple truth is that we each hold fast to many beliefs that are not *entirely* true. We must allow God to modify – and sometimes radically change – our understandings about Him and life. That’s what “the renewing of your mind” is all about. God desires to “update” our minds to the principles and truths He put into place at the beginning of time. As our thinking changes, our lives change. **As our lives align more fully with God’s ways, we experience a burgeoning sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment.**

As you work through this book, I will challenge you to focus on what I believe to be the four most Essential Questions in life: 1) Who is God? 2) How has God designed life to be lived? 3) Who am I? and 4) What is God calling me to do? Throughout the journey, I will guide you through several processes designed to help you find **divinely inspired** answers to each question. **Your answers to these four questions will serve as the foundation of your mental framework.**

The most crucial point is that **you must engage in the inquiry process – finding your own answers** to each question. While no one can ever fully answer any of these questions, you will find that as you discover new and more profound answers – and allow God to direct your life accordingly – you will experience an ever-deepening sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment. **The “full” life you desire will unfold automatically from your diligent engagement in finding correct answers to these four essential questions.** That is what I have discovered and seen lived out in many people’s lives.

It’s really that simple, although following that process is not always easy! The journey will challenge you in many significant ways. You **can** fully achieve your dreams, but it will require you to be courageous in examining yourself, letting go of false beliefs, and adopting new ways of thinking and acting. Your eventual “dream life” will likely look much different from what you initially imagined, but it **will** produce the deep sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment you long to experience. The only question is: How badly do you want to find fulfillment of the dreams that dwell in the core of your being?



Since you've taken the step to begin reading this book, I trust that your desire to fulfill your dreams is strong enough to meet the demands that will be required of you!

Because this journey is God-centric, you might wonder if God will accept you – if you are “good enough” to qualify to have God direct you into the “full” life you desire. Scripture answers that question in the affirmative in many different passages, but the Apostle Peter’s comment in Acts 10:34 directly addresses that concern: “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality.” ***No one is worthy of God’s blessings, but He invites everyone into a relationship with Him – even you!*** God is not angry with you and is not disappointed in you. Nothing in your past is an obstacle! His only desire is that you seek Him and surrender to His leadership as He reveals Himself to you and helps you discover and understand the truths He put into place at the very beginning of time. Your calling – everyone’s calling – is to seek after truth. And all truth is found in Him. In John 14:6, Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

If this discussion has been helpful, I'd like to let you know about a book I've written that explores this and other closely related topics in greater depth. The title of the book is: “Finding Meaning, Purpose, and Fulfillment: Making Sense of God, Life, and Success.”

My goal in writing this book was to help people better understand how God designed life to be lived and what He expects from each of us. In its broadest sense, God designed life as a journey of discovery with Himself as our guide, counselor, and primary resource. You and I are called to be students of life with God as our teacher!

If you didn't enjoy going to school, let me assure you that having God as your life teacher will be substantially better than any previous educational experiences. God is not angry with you, He is not disappointed in you, and He will never pressure or embarrass you. He is genuinely a kind, loving, and supportive teacher – more so than any teacher, coach, counselor, or parent you have ever known. A big part of your life as a student is discovering how truly awesome God is!


My book highlights the most important life principles God has established, guides readers in building and deepening their relationship with Him, and outlines ways to adjust their life practices to further God's purposes in and through their lives. ***In short, my book addresses one central question: What is life really all about?***

Each of us recognizes that we are responsible for how we live our lives. We each must find answers to the most profound and important questions of life. But what are the most critical questions for which we must find answers?


As I reflected on my life experiences in the months leading up to my retirement from teaching and pastoring, the Holy Spirit helped me realize that everything of value I had ever learned was an answer to one or more of four questions. In my book, I refer to these as the “Four Essential Life Questions.”

1. Who Is God?
2. How Has God Designed Life to be Lived?
3. Who Am I?
4. What Is God Asking Me to Do?

What profoundly impacted me was the realization that as I have found answers to these Essential Questions over time, and followed God’s guidance to bring my life into alignment, meaning, purpose, and fulfillment have grown in my life. I believe that is how God wants to bring meaning, purpose, and fulfillment into your life as well.



Who Is God?



**How has God
Designed Life to
be Lived?**



Who Am I?



**What is God
Calling Me to
Do?**

The Essential Questions serve as containers. The more you fill these containers with answers and align your life accordingly, the more meaning, purpose, and fulfillment will grow. You will experience the “full life” Jesus died to secure for you as you allow God to reveal answers to the Essential Questions and then follow His guidance. The book also provides detailed guidance on how to incorporate the Essential Questions into your daily life.