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**Presentation Transcript**  
**Unlocking Your Full Potential – Why Were You Born?**  
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Bill here for LifeResource Ministries.

Today we're continuing our series called *Unlocking Your Full Potential*. We said the key to unlocking full potential was about asking the right questions. So today we're going to start with the first question, "Why were you born?"

We see all manner of self-help material out there. Usually what we see on the market is about making money, gaining power, gaining status, gaining influence, looking good, manipulating other people to do what we want. We think this approach is completely off track. If a person goes about living life that way, it will wind up in the end meaningless and empty. Look with me in Ecclesiastes 1:14 to something Solomon said.

**Ecclesiastes 1:14** – *I've seen everything that is done under the sun and, behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.* All the things we do to find our way is futility – it's off track.

So we're going to show a way to think about yourself and your life that will really help you unlock your full potential – way beyond anything you could ever have imagined on your own. So let's get started.

Why were you born? Some years ago I was talking to a man who ran an outreach program in the Ukraine. In his travels, he met some Sabbatarian Christians there. And, since I'm a Sabbatarian Christian, I was interested in what he had to say about them. I asked him how they were similar to us and how they were different. I especially wanted to know how their church grew without money and without media evangelism. He told me that the way they thought about church and themselves had a lot to do with it. It was completely different than the way we think about it. And I said, "Well, how is it different?" And he said, "In our world, when a couple decides to have a child, they think about it as something for them –

that they want to do, because it will please them. They think of the child as *their* child. That child is going to make them happy, fulfill their desires for completion and meaning, etc. But in their world – the world of the Sabbatharians in the Ukraine – they think of having a child as a gift that God gives them for *His* benefit and *His* purpose. The child they will raise will be for God. From the time that child is conceived, it has a specific purpose known only to God. And God will guide that child toward His purpose that He has in mind for that child. They also see their child as part of God's church – the body of Christ. The child has a position and a purpose, already held in the mind of God, before it's even born. When a young couple has a baby, they're doing it not to please themselves – though they certainly *will* be fulfilled and happy in the process – that's the way God's way works – but to produce a child for God. From the moment their child is born, every thought, every activity, every effort is toward that end. There's no casting about, no doubt, no wondering with the parents. They know from the beginning their child's purpose – why their child was born."

So which way is the biblical way? Our way, here in the US or their way, there in the Ukraine? Well, here's a scripture that settles it. In this scripture, God is telling Judah about their sins. Let's listen in on one of them. It's in Malachi 2:13.

**Malachi 2:13** – *And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears – with weeping and groaning – because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does He not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did He not make them one with a portion of the spirit in their union? That's an interesting thought, isn't it? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourself and your spirit and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.*

Did you catch that? What does God want when two young people take vows, promise each other and God to live together all their lives? He wants their children. He wants godly offspring. And He also wants *them* to be godly offspring and stay together like God intended.

So the Ukrainian Sabbatarian view of family, marriage, children, church is a godly, biblical way to think about it. That leaves us lacking here in our culture. That way produces a faith – a knowing – that settles all the doubts and gives meaning to every child's life. It's interesting to me that, here in the US – a nation founded on the Bible – that our churches can't keep their young people. They are leaving in droves. But among the Sabbatharians in the Ukraine, the rate of loss is very, very low. Their children grow up to be Sabbatarian Christians.

As I said, in our world we have no such knowing. We have children to please ourselves, or because it's natural, or because they make good tax deductions, or because we can get

more welfare. Even if we grow up Christian, our knowing is in platitudes and generalities. “Well, what’s your goal? What’s the goal of your life?” “I’m going to heaven,” or, for independent Church of God people, “The Kingdom of God.” And what’s that like? And what will you be doing there? No clue. No detail. No purpose. No knowing in the bones. Nothing to latch onto that has any real meaning – just a slogan or a platitude. Because of that lack of knowing in our bones, from our earliest recollection, we never reach our full potential because we don’t even know what direction to go to find it.

So we take college courses, we read self-help books, we marry first one person and then another, looking for that something that’s missing. We dabble in various religions or movements, looking for that elusive happiness, uncertain and unsettled – picking a direction because it’s what interests us, rather than from a sense of purpose – casting about all our lives, until we end up rich or poor, powerful or weak, educated or not, but always feeling like we’re missing something or that there should have been more. “I have seen everything that is done under the sun and, behold, all is futility and a striving after wind.” Have you ever tried to catch the wind?

There are multiple illegitimate children born in this world every day and many children who are aborted. What does God think of them? Well, each one of those children is a child of God. And each one of them was born to be His – illegitimate or not. God is creating a family. He knows that children born out of wedlock will inevitably face challenges that children who grow up in stable homes will lack. He knows that children born to young girls face a much increased chance of birth defects. But every child was born with a genetic predisposition to connect to a biological father and mother. And He knows that, if parents divorce, the children will experience extreme losses that will present them with challenges that will make their life more difficult.

Nonetheless, every child born is God’s child and He loves them each and every one. He wants godly offspring. And that includes you. You were born to be a child of God and He has big plans for you. There’s no one else like you in all the creation. His plans for you are so big that in your wildest dreams you could never imagine what He has in store for you. God’s plan for you is called the mystery of the ages. The apostle Paul tells us that that mystery has already been revealed in Jesus Christ.

But let’s get a little bit more specific. There was a man mentioned in the Bible. His name was Abraham. God called him many things. He called him His friend. He called him the father of many nations. He called him the father of the faithful. The nation that came from him was called Israel. And today, one of the names for the church in the New Testament is the Israel of God. There is something about this man that God has chosen to honor down through the ages – from early in Genesis – 4,000 years ago nearly – to this present day and then on into eternity. Abraham’s life has great meaning for every human living, dead or, as yet, unborn. He was born in the Middle East – way east of Jerusalem. He was a herdsman and a nomad. He lived in a tent and he rode a camel. He honored God in everything he did.

And when God told him to get up and move everything he had, he did it without question. He was even willing to sacrifice his son on God's command, though later God didn't really make him do it. It was just a test. But God found that, in everything, Abraham was always willing to believe what God said and to do what God told him. And because he was so faithful to God, God told him that He would give his children all the land from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates River in what is now Iraq. He also told him that, because of his obedience and faithfulness, the Savior of the world would be born through his family line.

Now before all this ever got started, I want you to notice something else about Abraham and the difference in the way the Bible talks about what I'm going to explain to you and the way *we* think about it. It's in Genesis 13:2.

**Genesis 13:2** – *Now Abram* – that was his name before he entered into relationship with God – *was very rich in livestock, silver and in gold*. You know, all the striving we do to make money? It's almost irrelevant in the biblical account. What was important and what gave meaning to Abraham's life was his relationship with God. Unlike others, Abraham was willing to do whatever God told him to do. In the meantime, he tended his flocks, settled squabbles between his workers, tried to keep his wife happy, got richer and richer because of his hard work and God's intervention in his life. But that was just an aside.

I know people who spend every waking moment thinking about how to make more money, but won't do what God tells them to do – won't keep the Sabbath, won't tithe, won't pray, won't take care of the poor, won't love their children, their mate, their neighbors, won't relate to God. How did Abraham relate to God? Well, it was by the way he related to others the way God told him to do – by doing the things that God told him to do. And, by the way, he happened to be rich. In our Christian culture, we spend all our time worrying about making money and about the future. We read self-actualization, self-help books. We think about investment strategies and working two jobs. And all that's good, but it should be in our minds that's by the way – not the big, most important thing. The big thing should be that we're going to be godly offspring for God's purpose and His pleasure and there's something way beyond money set in store for us later.

Did you know that? That when we connect to God in our hearts – our attitudes, and our values and our behavior, God enjoys us? Have you ever had a really good friend – someone that you love to spend time with? Look at this scripture – James 2:23:

**James 2:23** – *And the scripture was fulfilled that said Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness, and he was called a friend of God.*

Even though, like every other man, Abraham was fallible and made mistakes, because he believed God, it was counted by God that he *was* righteous and they were friends. What do you know? Grace in the Old Testament. To deny the Old Testament is to deny God's grace. That Abram was rich was incidental and unimportant. You know, many of the people that

God loves are very important. There are lots of people in the Bible that God used very seriously and yet they had no money. Being God's friend is what gave meaning to Abraham's life – not all the camels that he owned.

Let's look at some things Jesus said – Matthew 6:24:

**Matthew 6:24** – *No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*

The only important thing in life, the only thing that has any lasting value, the only thing that we need is a connection to God. So don't get distracted with other pursuits while you're trying to make a living and raise kids and all of those things. Set those things on the back burner in your mind while you take care of the day to day. Put first in your mind the most important thing – the thing that will fulfill all your needs forever.

Let's read on – Matthew 6:25:

**V-25** – *Therefore I tell you, “Do not be anxious about your life – what you will eat, or what you will drink, nor about your body – what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more valuable than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life. And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field – how they grow. They neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field – which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven – will He not much more clothe you – oh you of little faith?”*

To spend all one's time fretting over material things suppresses the development of our full potential. If we put God first, He will add all the things we need without us having to worry about it all. And our full potential will blossom forth naturally out of relationship with God. Verse 31:

**V-31** – *“Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.”* Did you catch that? Your heavenly Father knows you need them all, so He's going to take care of you. *“But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness”* – that thing that Abraham had because he believed God – he believed God would do what He said He would do – *“and all these things will be added to you.”*

I know a man who lives this way. His name is Bernie. I hope he watches this. He grew up with parents who could not hear. He didn't start school until he was in the third grade,

because his parents didn't know when to start a child in school. As a result, he had a special place in his heart for the disadvantaged – especially those who couldn't hear. As an adult, God led him to Ecuador, where he established an orphanage. There were two hundred children in the orphanage, that he had there, who depended solely on him for their physical needs. He told me that at one point expenses were running high and no money was coming in. They had cut the meals as low they could go. They deferred all other expenses. How much money does it take every day to feed two hundred children three squares? They'd prayed – still nothing happened. He went to other charities. The most notable of them turned him down in a rather rude fashion – sent him away with an insult and an empty hand. One afternoon, in the midst of this trial, he was in his office, praying for help, when he heard a terrible metal-to-metal grinding noise outside. He rushed out to the street to see a very large truck with smoke billowing from under the hood. He asked the driver what happened, and the driver told him that the motor had thrown a rod and blown up right there in front of his orphanage, and could he use his phone please. So, when the driver finished his call, they went back outside, and he explained to Bernie that no help would be coming anytime soon. And he also said the truck was a refrigerated truck and was filled with food, and could he use it so that it would not go to waste. It was only then that Bernie looked and saw the big sign on the side of the truck. It belonged to the charity that had sent him away empty. The truck contained enough of all kinds of food that they needed to fill their freezers completely once again.

You know? Somebody up there said, “Well, Bernie needs it more than they do.” So that was taken care of.

Do you think God enjoyed that little episode? Do you think that pleased God? Before we can unlock our full potential, we have to be focused on the right thing. And the physical – whatever it is – *isn't* that right thing. Money *isn't* it. Popularity *isn't* it. It's God! And until we get our priorities right, and we know what is important, everything we do *is* – as King Solomon said – just striving after wind. It's a waste of life.

I heard a story about a man who, during the Depression, was driving his car through the Oklahoma dust bowl. His car broke down in the middle of nowhere. He looked around for help, and he walked to the top of a knoll to get a better look. He saw something dark on the ground in the distance and he walked to it. And what he found there was a pool of oil. Realizing what it was, he walked back to his car, and eventually, someone came by. He got his car towed in, he repaired it, and then he went back to the town and inquired about the land that had the oil on it. The owner wanted to sell not just a small plot, but the entire farm. The man didn't have the money, so he went and sold everything that he had, and he borrowed money on all the capital that he'd accrued. He put himself deep in debt, because he knew that if he could just get that land, all his financial problems would be solved – and also his children's problems. And his children's children would never want for anything again. His whole mind and effort was focused on getting that land. He put all distractions aside – all his effort went toward the goal.

Jesus said that the Kingdom of God was like a man who found a treasure in a field. It's so important that we have to make it the top priority and just let Him take care of the incidentals along the way.

So the very first step toward unlocking all the potential that God has put within you is to realize it's not about money, power, or fame, control, security. So why were you born? Well, here's a big clue. It's not about you. It's about the One who made you. It's way outside of you – beyond you. It's not what *you* want. It's what *He* wants for you. It's what He's going to give you in spite of yourself. It's so good you couldn't ever even dream it up! So it's better than anything you could seek for yourself.

You know, people can scoff about this. And eventually, He's going to make apologists out of them. And people can doubt and He'll make believers of them. And people can turn away and He will draw them back around. The purpose for which He created you *will* be yours. And what is that purpose? Well, when you were first conceived, it was a big day for God. He looked down into your mother's womb and He saw two tiny cells had fused. And from that moment He knew all about you. Since then, He's been working a plan. That plan is, in part, based upon your genetic structure. He's passing you through various experiences to shape and groom you for a special purpose and a special place in His family. He has *big* plans for you – big plans for you in His church and big plans for you in His government in eternity.

Do you know that God tells us that He's designing a holy temple in heaven? It's a temple that's going to be made up of people. And each one of us is like a stone. It says that Jesus is the chief cornerstone and we are all built on that foundation of Jesus Christ. We're all built into that temple with Him. We're all members of His temple – His government, His family. And this temple is described, in Revelation 21, as coming down out of heaven to earth – kind of contrary – backwards – to what most of us think. And it says there are twelve pillars in it. And each one of them is named for one of the twelve apostles. So they have a place in the family of God. It's already laid out there in the temple. David has a position there. And so will you. We will all have important positions of infinite interest, diversity and enjoyment in God's Kingdom. Just like God takes pleasure in us, we will take pleasure in Him and in each other.

It's going to be about advancing God's plan for eternity. And we will be right there with Him in His work. David said something about this. It's in Psalms 84:10.

**Psalms 84:10** – *For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

David is going to be very high up in the government of God because he was a man after God's own heart. He's going to be in the city of God. But he said that he would rather be a janitor there than live in the luxury of sin in this life. He would trade a thousand other days

for one day with God. He was willing to forego *everything* for one day with God. But we know from the scripture, because he was willing to do that – because he *believed* God’s promises, just like Abraham – he’s going to get to spend not a day, but an eternity in that court that he loved so much. And it is going to be good when he gets there!

You know, it’s all about the relationship. It’s why you were born. It’s the sum total of your potential in Jesus Christ.

Well, that’s it for today. There’s so much more though – more specific things ahead in this series – more specific questions and answers. In our quest to ask the right question, we’ve left many questions still unanswered. So check back in two weeks to learn the answer to the question, “Why did God call you?”