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**Presentation Transcript**  
**Unlocking Your Full Potential – Has Your Mission Changed?**  
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Bill here for LifeResource Ministries.

Today we're concluding our series called *Unlocking Your Full Potential*. And this final presentation is called *Has Your Mission Changed?* So let's get to it.

All through this series we've talked about getting in sync with our Creator and the purpose for which He has created us. And we talked about a personal mission that we all receive from God. We've talked about a special gift God gives to every Christian to help them accomplish their mission. But we've not yet talked about the very real fact that sometimes God changes our mission. Why would God do that? And what kind of changes might we see in today's world when a person's mission is changed by God? And what does a change look like in today's world?

Well, I think there are several reasons why God changes our missions from time to time. He knows that we are very human and frail. And He knows all our needs. And He knows what we need to grow and He gives us what we need to unlock our full potential. And sometimes that's a change. People get stale sometimes or they need to learn other things. Most people hate change, but Christians need to lean into it and accept it as God moves us around to give us the experience we need in order to become perfected for His family. We can see it as an expansion – a growing. 2 Peter 3:18 tells us that:

**2 Peter 3:18** - *We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And to Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.*

So God gets all the credit and we just follow along and do what He leads us to do – what we can detect that He wants us to do.

Think about the people in the Bible. A good number of the disciples were fishermen in the beginning. And then, all of a sudden, they were fishers of men, Jesus told them. Jesus made a connection for them. But fishing, really, is not much like what they did with him afterward. And after He made that change, He left them and left them in charge. And that was another huge change. And first they were in Jerusalem, but that changed, too. And they went all over the known world, preaching the gospel.

Think about David. David was tending sheep one minute, then he was killing a giant the next. Then he was a national hero. Then he was running for his life. And then he was king – huge changes in his life.

Through all the changes that caused to happen in the lives of David and the disciples and the other biblical people, God developed the potential to become a member of His family. And He'll do the same for you. It's important to know that things will change. I doubt any of us will be killing giants or becoming kings – in this life, at least – so what do changed look like in the modern world.

Well, I think about my wife, Elaine, and her life. After we married, her role was primarily that of a mother of two, as well as a pastor's wife. Now, we saw earlier in this series that God wants Godly offspring, so it's very important – it's a *mission* – that parents are sent on to raise their children for God. So that was a very important responsibility that she had. It was her mission – and mine, too. She was also a pastor's wife. And that's an important job. She did the mother thing for twenty years or so. Now she's still a mother, but that role changed significantly after the girls left home. And since I'm no longer a pastor, she doesn't do that any longer either. So what does she do?

Well, about fifteen years ago, she went back to school and took bookkeeping courses. And that wasn't related to her mission – at least, she didn't think so. She did it because she needed a skill so that she could take care of herself, should I ever kick the bucket. Well, that wasn't her mission, was it? She just did that because it was a physical need that she had. And she ran a small business for number of years, gaining experience and learning what parts of the business she liked and what she didn't. She found she didn't like the stress of doing taxes. However she was really good at keeping a good set of books. She has incredible attention to detail. She has always considered herself sort of a zero on the computer, but she uses a computer now in her work every day and has learned a lot more than she realizes. She surprises me frequently with what she can do.

I remember, a number of years ago, she was going to give a presentation at the Feast in Florida at the CEM festival site. She wanted me to show her how to use PowerPoint so she could make some slides. And I was expecting to take quite a while with that. It took me a long time to learn it. Well, I spent, maybe, fifteen minutes with her and she was off and running. By the way, to date, that presentation she did there at the Feast, that's received the most comments and is the most requested presentation we've ever done. You may

remember it. It was about introversion. If you want to check it out, just go to our Website – [www.liferesource.org](http://www.liferesource.org). Click on the brown button in the upper left corner and type in *introvert* in the search field and it will pop up along with every reference we've ever made to introversion over the years.

I always knew she was a good public speaker, but I didn't know *how* good until that presentation. And that's not the biggest thing I learned. She intuitively knew that her struggle was not solely hers and that what she learned about introversion could help others. She read a book about introversion. So was her presentation a book report? Well, it very easily could have been, but it wasn't. What made it so good was that she wasn't afraid to reveal her struggle. She was the one who told me years ago that I needed to tell more personal stories in my sermons. So she has a knack for that – a gift.

It's also interesting to me, that while she was a pastor's wife, she had no idea of another gift she had. She writes awesome notes of encouragement. I mentioned this before, so I'm not going to dwell on it right now, but we would probably have never known this, except we started LifeResource Ministries. Her role has been dealing, primarily, with the financial and logistical side of it – disc duplication, mailing, finances, and all that. And while we couldn't have a ministry without that – her efforts are vital – it's not overtly spiritual. So I believe God provided her a way to directly help people spiritually. He gave her a gift. He added something to her to help connect with people one to one – people she didn't know. Isn't that great? God shows us what we can do and reveals our abilities to us through the missions that He assigns to us. And He does little things to help us get better at what He wants us to do.

I think about a friend of mine – Ray Wooten. I've known Ray for thirty-five years or so. When I first met him, he was pastoring a church I used to serve in as an assistant and later an elder. I always liked Ray because he was so down to earth and so funny. But I saw him, when I knew him back then, mostly as an administrator, because that's the side I saw of him. And he *was* an administrator, because that was a very large church. He had lots of help to do the work, but he had to make sure it all stayed on track. He was an administrator – not that he didn't have a spiritual life – I'm just talking about how I knew him back then. About ten years ago, I met him in Lexington at the Winter Family Weekend, not having seen him since he started up his ministry that he'd been doing since then. And he made a comment in his characteristic Ray way. We'd been talking about what we'd been doing in the interim of our relationship, and he said, "I decided to go through all the notes in my Bible from college. I learned so much!" Since then I've noticed that Ray knows a lot about the Bible – not just what it says and where things are, but what it *means*. His mission changed from one of pastoral administration to ministering the word. And once he got into that role, God gifted him with the ability to study the Bible and understand what it means. He had time to sit and think about it every day – and think deeply, and pray, and learn God's word. We really *need* people like that – who can help us. So that's a great thing, I think. Some people don't take the time to do that as much as Ray did. So it's great that he

can share with us what he knows. It's a gift! So, to sum up, God changes our mission from time to time for our growth.

Another example I can think of is Jennifer and Guy Swenson. Guy worked for a large electronics company as a manager. Now he cares for the poor – a dynamic change – learning all the while. It's amazing to watch what's going on in their lives.

Let's look at another reason that God might change us. I'm reminded of one of my instructors in my master's program. She mentioned that she had to change her focus in her general field every ten years or so, so that she didn't get burned out or bored. She wanted to be engaged by her work – interested in it, growing, learning new things. So I think one of the reasons God does that is for renewal or, sometimes, just for fun – or make things fun again.

I had been a counselor for ten years before I ever learned to do EMDR. And that change was a completely different way of helping people. It reinvigorated and enthused me. I had also been a church pastor for thirty-six years when I resigned and founded LifeResource Ministries. And while I was pastoring, I enjoyed that role, but toward the end, I became mentally weary – exhausted. Guess which of the helping professions is considered the most taxing by other professional helping fields. Well, it's the ministry. It's an all-in kind of thing. Professional counseling, by comparison, is a piece of cake. When I started my master's program in counseling, it was like a new life. I learned a lot. And I could see all kinds of applications for church work. It filled me with excitement about the future. And it was *fun*. I *loved* doing that master's program. You know, I hated elementary school. I really didn't like middle school. I tolerated high school. College was a bit better, but I *really* like my master's program. It was fun. I think about my whole life to see what God has done. Sometimes we can't see it till we look in the rearview mirror. So we don't realize what's going on in the present. We have to wait until the present is the past to understand why God did what He did. So that should help us, in the present, realize that, just because we don't understand it, doesn't mean we won't later.

They say that, unless we use the two main strengths in our everyday life, we're not as happy and fulfilled as we could be. And my top strength – argued by some – is social and my second is mechanical. And even though I've always worked with my primary skill set in my work as a minister, I've noticed that I've always needed something mechanical going on to feel right – to feel complete. So, over the years, you know, I've built a couple of houses, I've remodeled a full basement, I remodeled a bathroom, I built a rock-crawler. But, in 1984, I bought a home computer – just sort of drawn to it. It seemed fascinating to me. And the thoughts of what might be done with it...of course, back then, we had no idea what we were going to be able to do with it today. My iPhone has ten times more power than that PC ever had. It's just amazing what's happened. But I spent an obscene amount of money on it and I spent a ton of time with it. And I wondered if I was doing the right thing – all that time and money. But right now, if I had not had that computer skill set that I have

– which, those skills are meager by some standards – I don't have any illusions about that – but we could not go on and do LifeResource Ministries without it.

So, a few years ago, however – after being on PCs for...let's see, from '84 to probably 2005? – that's a long time – we switched to Apple. And that was a challenge at first, while we were on the low end of the learning curve – had work to do and couldn't figure out how to do some of it – and it was a blessing, however, as we learned the operating system and could do more work with it. And, overall, it's been stimulating to learn something new. It was kind of fun to do that. It was expanding.

Recently, we had a burglary at my practice office and my Mac was stolen. We had good backup, so we didn't lose much data, but now I'm on a quest to develop a much better backup and security system. So we're on the verge of installing a network-attached storage unit. It's like a little server, so that we can have our own cloud-based operation. And that way, if my computer is stolen again, no personal or other sensitive data will have to be on that machine or on any of our computers. And I've been noticing my own reaction to that. It's going to be work, but it's also going to be a lot of learning. And I'm excited about it. It's fun to learn new things. Now that's not a change of mission. It's just a change of operation, but illustrates the point of what change can do for us. It's going to expand me a bit.

And this whole thing with the burglary has been somewhat like the zen master story. You know, I got a home computer. That's good. Well, we'll see. I had doubts. I paid too much money for it, by today's standards. Well, that's bad. Well, we'll see if it is. I learned a lot. Well, it's always good to learn. So that's good. Well, we'll see. You didn't learn enough. You got robbed and your computer was stolen. That's bad. Well, we'll see. But now, because of the motivation from the robbery, our data is going to be much more secure and our computer is much more useful. So that's good. Well, we'll see.

Where in your life has it been like that? You know, back and forth and up and down, fun sometimes, difficult at others? And what's next? I'm reminded of this scripture. Joseph said this when his brothers showed up in Egypt to buy food because of the famine, after selling him into slavery. It's in Genesis 50:20.

**Genesis 50:20** – *As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good – to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.*

So it might seem bad sometimes – the things that happen – but God turns it out to good. With God, we just have to go with it, and take the ride and watch what He's doing. And sometimes we don't learn that till later. Joseph didn't. He couldn't figure out why he was taken into slavery, but there you have it.

So changes keep us fresh, interested and alive, and they make our lives fulfilling and interesting.

Now, to introduce the next benefit of a changed mission, look with me in Numbers 8:23:

**Numbers 8:23** – *And the LORD spoke to Moses and said, “This applies to the Levites from twenty-five years old and upward. They shall come to do the duty of the service of the tent of meeting. So they were priests, and they came, and they worked in the priesthood from twenty-five on. And from the age of fifty they shall withdraw from the duties of the service and serve no more. So they were retired. They minister to their brothers in the tent of meeting by keeping guard, but they shall do no service. Thus shall you do to the Levites in assigning their duties.* The Levites received no inheritance in Israel. They lived from the tithes of the other tribes because they served in the temple as priests. After twenty-five years of service, they retired from the active priesthood and became guards – a much less taxing responsibility. Their early retirement ensured that all of the active-duty priests were fully up to the job. And it let the older ones have some *good* time to do other things after working hard for such a long time.

Sometimes, as we get older, God assigns us new jobs so that we can get rest. And that will help us stay viable longer. Some people really against this. They kick against the goads, like Paul did when God called him. They can't admit they're getting older and can't do as much as they used to do. Those of us who *are* older ought to be humble as John the Baptist, who told Jesus that it was Jesus' time to increase and his own time to decrease. Sometimes the change God brings us is a decrease. And that's all for His purpose, too – not that we need to quit our mission before God is ready, but when it comes time, it's good to decline gracefully. Otherwise, we'll be hung out there, trying to do something, thinking it's a mission and it really isn't our mission anymore. And that's not going to be a pretty picture.

Have you ever seen anybody in the pulpit who is just too old to do it any longer? You know, they can't think of the right words, and they can't prepare anymore? It's very embarrassing to watch it, actually. And it's not just that God moves us to easier work when we get older always. I moved to a large urban church in my late 40s – after pastoring small congregations – and I expected it to be a lot more work. But it wasn't. It was easier in many ways. There were a number of really good speakers, so I didn't have to prepare a good sermon every week in two churches. There were volunteers to do almost everything that Elaine and I used to have to do ourselves. My job was to keep it all running smoothly. It was a nice break after nineteen years of intense hands-on effort.

And when the slower times come, don't fret. Don't worry. Don't try to keep your hands tightly wrapped on the wheel. Just enjoy it. Rest up. It's going to get hard later. So relax when you can.

I remember talking to Ron Dart when we were starting up LifeResource Ministries. He said, “You’re going to work harder than you’ve ever worked in your life.” And he was right. He would know, because he did the same thing. But, as it happened, it’s all work that I like to do, so it’s *not* so hard. God lets us have some fun.

Okay, let’s move to another why God, sometimes, changes our mission. He does it when He needs someone to do something for Him. Think of all the prophets, the twelve apostles, Paul, David, Moses. All of them were conscripted, so to speak, to do specific things that God needed to get done. Some of them were prepared for a long time before they knew what they were to do, too. Moses, you know, ran off into the desert when he was forty and Israel did not leave Egypt until he was eighty. So there were forty years of prep there before he knew what they were going to do. It was 1989 or 90 when I first started learning what I needed to learn to become a counselor and a minister that knew how to connect to young people. It wasn’t until 2004 that I started working in that mission that God had been training me for. That’s a long time – at least it is the way I look at it. So why didn’t He teach me all that sooner, so I could have used the knowledge in the mission longer? Well, I’m never going to get done with that mission.

Well, I said in previous presentations, “It’s not about us.” And that’s true. It’s not about me and how much I can do. But it *is* about us in that He lets us help, because it’s good for us. While we’re doing what God wants, we’re learning and changing and growing when we’re engaged in that mission work. So God doesn’t really *need* us to do what we do.

When we looked at the Church of God scene, we didn’t see anyone who was teaching good parenting, who was dedicated solely to young people, who knew how to overcome depression and anxiety. Now I’m sure there are people who know how to do those things in the church, but we didn’t see them. So we detected that was something God wanted done and we had the skills and the training to do it. So that’s what we started to do. But, sometime in the future, I will not be able to do that work any longer. But that’s okay. Others will pick it up. Others are probably doing it now, in fact. We just don’t know them. But God has given us some years to help His people – and to do that one at a time. And we’ve done that with His help. That’s our mission – at least it is now. But it may change. Only God knows.

Are you ready for change? Have you identified your earthly mission? How do you detect it? What’s the story that goes with your mission and how you got started in it? And what are you doing to serve God? In doing that work, God is developing you to fulfill your human spiritual potential. But it may change. It probably *will* change. Will you be alert and ready for the changes? No matter what those changes will be – whether they’re going to be fun or hard, restful or exhausting, good or bad – in the end, they will all work out for your good – for your perfection – to bring you closer to your full potential in Jesus Christ.

Well, that's it for today. Remember that God wants us to engage in His work. And that work helps us reach connection with Him and prepares us for our role in eternity. Don't drift through life aimlessly. Take steps now to understand your calling, your mission and your gift. Detect your mission. Start doing the work God has prepared you for and for you.

If you have any questions or comments, be sure to contact us through our Website or comment on our YouTube channel, LifeResouce Videos, and be ready for what's coming in two weeks. We'll be starting a new series on spiritual renewal. Even if you feel spiritually energized right now, you need to hear this material, because, as we saw just today, things change. At some time in the future, you're going to need to recharge in order to do your work for God. So we're going to show how God recharges us so that we can continue on with Him, doing His work.