

LIVING  
IT OUT



**DAILY  
BIBLE  
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# If I Told You My Story... - The Adventure of You

April 26, 2021

Many people think they do not have a story, but I am not one of them. Jesus Christ radically changed my life in so many ways; I don't have space for them all. I certainly was not like the apostle Paul, adhering to all the laws and rules! Beginning with my unplanned pregnancy at 19, I ran from God until the age of 43, doing whatever I thought I needed or wanted to make myself happy! If you had asked me what would make me happy, I'm sure I couldn't have told you. But I pursued "it" to the detriment of my children, family, and other relationships. Somehow, I managed to work and support myself and my kids (2 by that time) through two marriages and two college degrees. I finally came to the end of myself one night in my patrol car. Listening to Christian radio, I encountered Jesus.

Somehow, I managed to work and support myself and my two kids through two marriages and two college degrees. I finally came to the end of myself one night in my patrol car. Listening to Christian radio, I encountered Jesus.

## **Acts 9:3-9**

*<sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" <sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. <sup>6</sup> "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." <sup>7</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup> Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.*

My *Damascus Road experience* happened on Lallendorf Road, in Oregon, Ohio, Feb. 16, 1994. Thankfully, since I was driving, the Lord did not take my sight! But he did lift the burdens and baggage I had been carrying all those years. That was the day I began the grand adventure that he has had me on ever since!

I got involved at Grace Evangelical Church, where my Ananias (see [Acts 9:10-18](#)), Lee Powell, was the associate pastor. Lee helped me to clarify my mission, and for the past 27 years, it has been to help women realize and live out who they are in Christ. God has turned all my experiences from my years of destructive

living into a ministry of compassion, guidance, and encouragement for women who, like I did, are now walking through tough times.

God gave me the honor of being one of the founding members of CedarCreek Church. From that point on, with the Holy Spirit's guidance, I've been doing what God planned for me to do with my life. I join with Paul, and countless other committed followers of Jesus, in saying:

**Acts 20:24**

*But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.*

God taught me that when you do what you are created for, you will see meaningful change in your life and in the lives of those around you.

To do this, we must learn about the gifts God has given us and focus on them. We must allow him to heal and transform the experiences we have lived. We must reach out to the people he puts in front of us. It can be overwhelming, but over the next few days, we will talk about how we can put definition to it all!

**Questions:**

Does your story include turning the leadership of your life over to King Jesus? If not, why? If not now, then when?

**Next Steps:**

If you have trusted Jesus to lead your life, your next step is a public declaration through baptism. The first weekend of every month, we hold baptisms at each campus. If this is your next step, go to [cedarcreek.tv/baptism](http://cedarcreek.tv/baptism) to register. If you have not participated in GrowthTrack yet, it is a great place to begin to discover the adventure God has for your life. You can find out more at [cedarcreek.tv/growthtrack](http://cedarcreek.tv/growthtrack).

Listen to: "[If I Told You My Story](#)" by Big Daddy Weave.

**Prayer:**

*O Father! Every time I think of the day you rescued me, it brings me to tears! I am so grateful that you waited for me. I am so grateful that you pursued me into the far country where I had run from you for so long! Thank you for protecting me and my family from the most horrible consequences of my sin! Thank you for redeeming me and them by your amazing grace! I worship you and praise you!*

*You are my King! You are my Lord! You are my Savior! I live for you and your pleasure. In Jesus' name, amen.*

*This post was written by Lauri White, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Clarifying Your Calling - The Adventure of You

April 27, 2021

We all have a number of things we want to do and accomplish in our lives, but there are many reasons we can't do it all. One reason is we simply don't have time to do everything we want. Another reason is we don't have the ability or capacity to do everything. And the third reason that Ben pointed out this past weekend is that if we say yes to everything, it will negatively impact our ability to do what we were created to do best— our calling.

When we realize our calling, and how our gifts and abilities help us accomplish it, we should maximize our efforts toward this purpose. How do we do that? We sharpen our “no,” because a Purpose-Filled NO creates space for an IMPACTFUL YES.

Today we will look at the first step in sharpening our “no”: writing a calling statement. A calling is a strong urge toward something; it is the mission or purpose for your life.

To write your statement, first take the time to pray. Ask God for wisdom and clarity about the purpose he has for you and how it will glorify him. Thank him for who he is and for the uniqueness he has created in and for you.

Write about your story, your passions, and your dreams. As you think about your story, start with *uncovering*. What important transitions and important events have happened? Then think about *challenges*. How have they clarified your mission? Once you have processed this, write a one sentence statement that will help you focus on your calling. It does not have to be perfect today. This may take time to develop.

If you go through this journey of writing out your calling statement, you will benefit from the adventure it takes to get there.

I am not quite sure what my calling statement is yet, but I am figuring it out with you and using this as a step to trust and lean on God more. I encourage you to do the same.

## **Proverbs 3:5-6**

*<sup>5</sup>Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding <sup>6</sup>but acknowledge him and he will make your path straight.*

**Questions:**

What important thread in your life has given you the most purpose?

Why do you think the journey is difficult?

What do you have a hard time saying no to, even though it does not give you purpose?

**Next Steps:**

Take this next week to process through your story, then write out your statement.

Share it with someone.

Post it somewhere where you see it as a reminder every day.

**Prayer:**

*God, you have a purpose for our lives that is meant to glorify you. I pray that through my uniqueness and story I will always be mindful of your calling for my life. That through this statement, I will think about the role I can play in other people's lives. It is a hard process, but I don't want to miss out on the most important part of an adventure. God, you never said faith, or the adventure, would be easy, but I believe that it is worth it. In Jesus' name, amen!*

# Put Value in Your Faith - The Adventure of You

April 28, 2021

A few weekends ago, my brother-in-law brought up my remarkable (in my mind at least) past prowess on the basketball court. My wife's eye-roll signaled my nephew to protest the mentioning of my former glory that only served to inflate my ego. Reliving those days reminded me of the attention to detail that went into playing for “bragging rights supremacy” among friends. Dedication to my craft, the wisdom of the game, and creativity were a few values that I used to achieve my purpose. I also implemented those core values for playing in a team atmosphere. Looking back, I had many of the same core values when answering the different callings I wanted in my life.

Thinking about the transformation that happened to Paul when he went from (Saul)—a self-righteous persecutor of Christ followers—to an apostle who wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament. This made me realize that Paul's core values were similar in both walks of his life. What changed was how he used those core values after clarifying his God-given calling.

## **1 Peter 4:10**

*God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*

Saul used a great deal of zeal, wisdom, and passion in his violent quest to destroy Christians, until his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. But once faith overtook his religious convictions, he finally started using those core values to benefit God's purpose.

Everyone's true calling is unique. When I stopped running from my calling, I dedicated myself to learning and growing. The wisdom I gained continues to push me forward in creative ways. Dedication, wisdom, and creativity are some of the values that I hold true to myself. Amazingly, I get to use my values to serve something greater than anything I could imagine. We should all hope to use our principles to lead us [BACK TO YOU](#).

## **Questions:**

How do you operate in your daily life? Do your values help to serve more than yourself?

**Next Steps:**

Take GrowthTrack to help clarify the values important to you.

Use your values to shape your purpose by paying attention to the things that go against your intuition.

**Prayer:**

*God, it is so special how you turned the violent nature of Paul into a life-changing movement that continues to serve your purpose today. Let all of us understand that it's never too late and we are never so far gone to be out of your line of sight. Your reach is great enough to lead us back to you. Your love is the adventure we all need. Amen.*

# Only You - The Adventure of You

April 29, 2021

*The Adventure of You* is the title of the series that Lead Pastor Ben Snyder talked about again this past weekend. Throughout this series, my mind has been focused on two words in the title, “adventure” and “you.” This weekend’s message really made me realize the importance of the second big word, “you.”

The truth is that the adventure of you only starts if you step into it. Additionally, that adventure only lives on if you continue to ask God what’s next and continue to seek the next chapter in the adventure he has planned. If you think your story is insignificant or that God doesn’t have a plan for you, consider this. If he had a plan for a Christian persecutor like Paul, he has a plan for you.

I was raised in a good, strong Christian home. I grew up in an Evangelical United Brethren church. I can’t remember a moment in my life when I did not believe in Jesus and what he did for me. I first accepted him into my life at age ten. I’d like to say that is when my adventure started, but it wasn’t. Even though I professed to be a Christian, there are many times in my life I did not live like one. Yes, I had brief adventures in church where I helped teach Sunday School or volunteered in areas or worked with the Youth Group, but mostly I was just going through the motions. I never experienced the ingredients that make for a great adventure—uncovering, challenging, clarifying, and achieving.

I was only focused on achieving what I thought was the “Christian” thing to do. Since attending CedarCreek, I can honestly say, even at age 67, my eyes are much more open to the story God has written for my life. I have started living the true life-changing adventure he has planned for me. I am in the middle of my adventure, where I have been through GrowthTrack (uncovering my purpose), challenging myself by publicly announcing my faith through baptism, joining some groups, and writing for LIO. I am now clarifying what is best that only I can do.

When you start an adventure, it is easy to get caught up in wanting to do it all. I'm going to lead this, and help with that. I'm going to be everything for everyone. This can lead you away from the true purpose and calling that God has planned for you. That is when you need to sharpen your "no." You need to take time to clarify best what only you can do. When you do this, it may mean you have to say no to some things that may be good and just, but may also distract you from God's plan in your adventure. Every yes is a no to something else, so give yourself permission to say no to the things that sidetrack you from your planned adventure.

How do we know when to say no? Take the time to listen to God's voice, that little internal whisper, that gut feeling, so to speak. How do you know you are on the right track in your adventure? When you begin to experience life changes in yourself and those around you, your greatest accomplishment might not be what you do, but rather who you influence. Whatever your calling, it is important to do best that which only you can do, and say no to what may distract you from accomplishing it.

### **Ephesians 2:10**

*<sup>10</sup> For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

### **Questions:**

Have you truly stepped into your adventure story?

Do you believe God has an adventure planned for you? He does!

Do you feel like your story is too insignificant to share? It's not!

### **Next Steps:**

If you haven't done so, go through GrowthTrack to help you define your purpose.

Remember, you must step into your adventure. God is calling.

### **Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the open invitation of a life-changing experience with you. Help me to seek and understand the adventure you are calling me into and to take the time to experience all the ingredients of that adventure. Help me to uncover my purpose, accept the challenges I will face, clarify what only I can do best, and sharpen my "no" to things that may distract me from my purpose, so that I may achieve all that your life-changing adventure has planned*

*for me. Thank you, Father, that my story is significant no matter how great or small. Please give me the courage to share it with others. In your holy name I pray, amen.*

*This post was written by Ned Miller, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Spiritual Blindness - The Adventure of You

April 30, 2021

With absolutely no effort at all, it is possible for me to “get lost” perusing greeting cards. I have always been of the opinion that messages presented on greeting cards should say exactly what the buyer means. As in, not “close to” what you mean or not “close enough” to what you mean, but “exactly” what you mean. Admittedly, accepting “close enough” is often required.

I likely would be dumbstruck if I were to see accurate data stating the amount of time I have spent reading card after card, looking for the “exact” message for the intended recipient. Were I to know how quickly that heartfelt, sincere greeting card was discarded (pun intended) by the recipient, I may have abandoned the effort I put forth to find it, but I sincerely doubt it. So often, then and now, cards given are Hallmark. “When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best,” why would you purchase anything else?

It is no different with God. He offers his best to us through heartfelt, sincere messages—penned by men inspired by God. By reading his greeting card/love letter to us, the Bible, he reveals himself and makes known his desire to have us embark on the great adventure he has planned for us.

The ingredients of this great adventure, as shared by Lead Pastor Ben Snyder, are uncovering, challenging, clarifying, and achieving. The adventure he has planned for us is dependent on our choosing to show up and participate! Sitting on the sidelines as a spectator keeps us from experiencing first hand his plan(s) for us.

One of the countless, meaningful messages God has for us, better than any Hallmark card, is referenced in Proverbs 29:18.

## **Proverbs 29:18 (MSG)**

*“If people can’t see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed”.*

Like the apostle Paul, the former “Christian killer” turned “Christian converter,” we can step in and do best what only we can do! Truly, God blesses us beyond measure when we attend to what he reveals. We can stand confidently, knowing God means what he says and he says what he means!

**Questions:**

What keeps you from participating in the great adventure God has planned for you? What obstacles need to be removed from your life's path? Do you need to change paths? Do you lack a personal relationship with God?

**Next Steps:**

Stop resisting God. Surrender to God, knowing he is faithful and trustworthy. Read [John 1](#) and [Proverbs 29:18](#). Pray that God clearly reveals what he is doing. Pray for strength to stop stumbling all over yourself. Pray for courage to attend to what God reveals.

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, forgive me for stumbling all over myself at times and failing to see what you are doing. Open my spiritual eyes to see with clarity what you are doing. Give me courage to step into the adventure you have for me. Allow me to genuinely sense your strength in me when doubt and fear try to take over. Help me to enjoy the journey as I place my complete trust in you. In Jesus' name, amen.*

*This post was written by Karen Peck, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*