

It's Working for Your Good

Embracing Life Lessons While Finding Purpose in Your Pain

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my son, Buddy. Because of you, I am forever changed. Thank you for saving my life.



Life Lessons

Romans 8:28 – And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. (KJV)

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Introduction

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. (KJV)

I wrote this book to tell my story...part of it, anyway. The pages of this narrative are filled with details about occurrences that have shaped my identity and magnified God's purpose for my life. I don't share these things for any self-serving reason. Instead, I hope my story serves as a relatable testament to God's enduring love, faithfulness and favor.

Through reading about the peaks and valleys of my life, I hope you're better able to recognize God's voice when He seems untraceable. It is my prayer that you are reminded of the type of God we serve and are compelled to look inwardly as you discover how God can use your experiences to teach you lessons that bring you closer to His will for your life.

So many times, we reach our lowest points and while there, in the thick of our turmoil, can't seem to find God's presence. It's hard for us to comprehend that our traumatizing circumstances are part of a divine plan. Many times, we're unable to fully understand just how God can turn a situation around, but the good thing is we don't have to. That's what makes Him God. We serve a God who knows the purpose He has for our lives and makes all things work toward it.

When your experiences cause you to question your faith, contemplate what testimony lies on the other side of your test. While it's easy to dwell on the life-altering decisions someone made that directly impacted your life, can you challenge yourself to love them anyway? Are you able to show compassion to the person who attacked your character? Can you exhibit empathy for the people who betrayed your trust? Can you resist the temptation to speak harshly to someone who disrespected you? Are you able to maintain your faith in God when it seems like He is silent? Are you able to maintain your peace when every extension of your life feels chaotic? I haven't always answered yes to all of those questions and, even now, I often fall short. Through my trials, however, God has elevated me to a place of enduring contentment and trust in His will.

After reading my story, I hope you are left feeling refreshed, renewed and inspired. I pray that your faith holds tight to the



unwavering assurance that no matter what stands before you...it's working for your good!



Lesson 1: Humility

Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. (NIV)

I was blessed to grow up in a household that was rooted in faith, love, respect and support. My parents were able to maintain balance, despite sometimes having different approaches to raising my brothers and me. Having friends and family members who were raised in single-parent homes allowed me to, even at a young age, appreciate the value of living with both of my parents. I've never been naive to the sacrifices parents make when raising children. Even as a child, I understood that being a parent was not an easy task, especially when a person does it alone.

Just like many young girls, I too fantasized about my wedding day, dream home and picturesque life as an adult. It was my dream to get married and raise a family in a two-parent household of my own. I promised myself that I would wait until I was married to have children and would always ensure my children had both parents in their lives. Even as I grew older, I unconsciously judged the single-parent family unit and promised myself that becoming a single mother wouldn't be in my future. I would be married to the father of my children and we would raise our children together as a cohesive unit. I never imagined that becoming a single parent would be part of my destiny. However, that is exactly what happened. As the result of a failed marriage, I became a single mother.

As an outsider, it's easy to view another person's situation and create hypothetical promises to yourself that stem from judgments of someone else's life. The truth is, however, you don't know what you'd do in any given situation until you're actually thrust into it yourself. Have you ever heard about another person's circumstances and said to yourself, "That could never be me"? You know what I mean: that friend who can't muster up the confidence to leave her cheating boyfriend, the coworker who is having an affair, the neighbor in an abusive relationship, the teen parent – and the list goes on. If you think back far enough, I'm sure you can recall a time (or two) when you judged someone else's circumstances.

Prior to my marriage, which has now ended, that judgment crept up when it came to divorce. If someone would have told me that I would one day be a divorced single mother, I would have hysterically laughed in their face.



Throughout my early and late 20s, I witnessed many marriages fail and attended a number of lavish weddings to commemorate unions that would last only a few months. I didn't want that to be me. I made a vow with myself that I would not be the girl whose marriage didn't last. Once I said, "I do," it'd be for life.

Who did I think I was? I thought I was in control of my life and future. In no way was I prepared for what would soon transpire and how the very thing that I promised myself would never happen would indeed be the vessel God used to teach me a very tough, but very necessary, lesson in humility.

Isolation

By the age of 31, I had conquered just about everything I had set out to do. I was an award-winning educator and was well on my way to becoming an administrator. I'd even managed to, not just purchase, but build my very first home. I was living my dreams. The way I saw it, God would see fit for me to get married and when He did, my husband and I would live happily ever after. I now realize that marriage simply became a box to check off my internal to-do list. Graduate from college, become a successful educator, build a home, get married. I, pridefully, worked hard to follow the footsteps I thought God laid out for me. Marriage became the obvious and orderly next step.

Before deciding to marry, my partner and I were in a long-distance relationship. We each lived comfortably in our respective birthplaces, just minutes away from family, friends, and the comforts of home. As our relationship progressed, so did the reality that one of us would have to uproot our lives. For months, we prepared for the inevitable by weighing the pros and cons of living here or there. Ultimately, we decided I'd be the one to move. And so for the sake of my relationship, future, and family, I took a leap of faith, stepped out of my comfort zone, and made the sacrifice. I sold my newly built home, resigned from my job, packed up my belongings, and left behind everything and everyone I knew.

After much prayer and many conversations with my loved ones, I was at peace with moving. I felt as though it was God's will and I was confident I'd be rewarded with my happily ever after. The truth is, I did not get married because I was head over heels in love or because I felt it was a God-ordained union. I got married because I thought it was what I was supposed to do at the time. I allowed social trends, internal timelines, and superficial expectations to dictate



my decisions. I had the mindset that if I did what I thought God wanted me to, then He would do what I wanted Him to do.

Thinking back, I realize I had so much to learn about what it means to live in God's will. Instead of praying for God to direct my path, my prayers consisted of a to-do list of what I wanted Him to do and how I wanted Him to do it. I can imagine God laughing hysterically at me trying to explain to Him the blueprint I'd developed for my life. I could not comprehend it then, but I now understand that God had a plan for my life and He was going to use my fantasy of happily ever after to prepare me for His purpose.

God's Will

It was through the experience of uprooting my life that I began to understand how God was using my situation to enlighten me in new ways. It became clear that God urged me to move because he was preparing me for a destiny that required isolation and separation. He was going to use this experience to humble me.

What I discovered, and what God already knew, was that being hundreds of miles away from my family and friends was the only way I would begin the journey He was preparing me for. While I was aware that moving to a new place would bring about new beginnings, at the time I did not fully comprehend the magnitude of what God had in store.

Were you ever placed in time-out for being disobedient? Imagine your 6-year-old self getting in trouble over and over again for breaking the same rule. In order for you to learn the significance of being obedient, you'd have to, time and time again, endure the consequences of your disobedience. While in time out, there are no distractions, no toys, and no one to talk to. The goal is that away from all other distractions, children will be compelled to reflect on their actions and consider the choices they've made. They have to make the humble decision to either learn from their choices and not make the same mistake again, or deal with the consequences if they continue the same actions.

For so long, I allowed life to distract me from taking heed to God's will for my life. I devoted the majority of my time and energy to my profession. I distracted myself regularly by finding ways to occupy my time. In retrospect, I wasn't doing this consciously. I didn't wake up in the morning and say "Today, I'm going to go to the mall so I can distract myself." In hindsight, however, that is exactly what was happening.



I wasn't able to fully understand why God said I would be the one to relocate until all of my bags and boxes were moved. I was suddenly isolated, far away from the familiarities of my comfort zone. I knew then...God was sitting me in the corner. He wasn't punishing me. He was preparing and humbling me. God needed my undivided attention, so He got me by myself. While there, He urged me to reflect on the choices I'd made in life and drove me to contemplate whether those decisions were a part of His will. I was being mentally and spiritually matured in ways that would elevate me to new heights and ultimately catapult me toward my purpose.

Due to my independent nature, God was usually not my first point of contact when navigating the muddy waters of life. I preferred to figure things out by calling friends or family members. I'd search the internet a few times, or maybe read a book before I even thought about seeking God for help or direction. He was my last resort. The problem is, that I was calling on God *after* exhausting all of my resources. The fact is God wanted me to call on Him as my *first and only* resource.

Sometimes we don't realize God is all we need until God is all we have. Initially, being in a foreign place while riding the tide of a failing marriage caused me to feel hopeless. I couldn't understand why God would instruct me to move only to leave me feeling like I was on a planet by myself, miserable and broken. I followed God's direction. How could I possibly be living anything other than my happily ever after? What I didn't know is that everything I thought was going to destroy me was actually being used to strengthen me. And because God orchestrates things in the serendipitous way He does, He used the very situation I had promised myself I would never be in to teach me the ultimate life lesson.

God got my attention in such an undeniable way. I could not confuse anything I was going through as being rooted in anything else but Him. There would be no store runs to make time pass and no going over a friend's house to escape the realities of my home life. God isolated me so that I had no other choice but to lean exclusively on Him.

Can you think of a time when you tried to take matters into your own hands? Did God step in to show you who was actually in charge? If you're anything like me, relinquishing control of your life seems burdensome and nearly impossible. It's frustrating to feel like you're sitting on your hands and allowing life circumstances to just happen to you. You want to fight, think, work, and hurry your way out



of unforeseen circumstances. This is where humbling yourself and understanding your role comes into play.

As independent and resourceful as we can be, we are still no match for God. It doesn't matter who we know, how intelligent we are, or what credentials we have, God has a way of humbly sitting us down and showing us just how magnificent He is.

Blessings aren't always packaged and wrapped as we expect them to be. God's will for our life is the fulfillment of *HIS* purpose, not ours. We are not the orchestrators of our lives, God is. We are not in control of our destiny, God is. Once we truly start embracing the concept that what He has in store will always be greater than any idea or fantasy we come up with on our own, we can truly begin walking in His purpose and fulfilling our true destiny.

My situation may differ from yours but think of a time in life when you felt alone or isolated. God just might have been trying to command your undivided attention. You never know how God will get you closer to your destiny, and nine times out of ten, it won't look anything like you'd imagined. As in my case, He might just place you in the situation you said you would never be in just to remind you how much you actually need Him.

If you're going through a period of isolation, remain humble and continue to seek God. Ask Him for wisdom, direction, and discernment so that you are able to fully hear and stand on His voice and promises. Ask God to open your mind and heart to accept His will over your life, and have peace with every outcome. If you stay focused and remain in His will, God will reveal your destiny and allow you to live in your truth. Even when you can't understand it, it seems impossible, or it seems like you're alone, trust that God is and always will be working for your good.



Thank you for downloading Chapter 1 of *It's Working for Your Good: Embracing Life Lessons While Finding Purpose in Your Pain*. If you found Jameelah's story inspiring and uplifting [click here](#) to delve deeper into her journey of faith and resilience.

