



DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Shallows – Part 4
A Pathway to Your Destination
Pastor Stephen Hayes
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Main Idea – The Bible says that God knew you even before He created the earth. The Bible also says He knew you, and created you, for a specific reason. To discover that purpose you will have to commit to doing the things it takes to put Him at the center of your life.

There is a “why” to your life

- You did not just appear on the planet by happenstance or random chance. God intentionally put you here at this point in history for His own reasons.
- It's your responsibility to seek God in order to discover that purpose.
- You will be on the road to discovering God's purpose when you determine to live a right life according to His rules.
- **Proverbs 29:18 – Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (KJV)**
- **Proverbs 29: 18 – 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. (Message)**
- Without God's Word in your life, you will tend to rely on your own instincts and tendencies; which will lead to unhappiness.
- However, when you dedicate yourself to understanding the “deeper things” of God, you will find the happiness that accompanies His purpose.
- **1 Corinthians 2: 6-12 – However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might**

know the things that have been freely given to us by God. (NKJV)

The world's vision is not God's vision

- If you don't find God's purpose for your life, you will fall for a worldly counterfeit.
- Covenant Church's vision is that you will: Know God, Find Freedom, Discover Your Purpose, and Make a Difference.
- The secular world offers a counterfeit vision that looks something like: Know Me, Find Fame, Discover a Platform, and Make a Dollar.
- The worldly model for happiness will actually lead to unhappiness and brokenness.
- You won't be able to find the real you (and your God-ordained purpose) if you don't know the real God.

Don't delay; turn back toward God right now

- The Bible teaches that now is the time to refocus your life. **2 Corinthians 6:2** – For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, *now is the accepted time*; behold, *now is the day of salvation*. (NKJV)
- Even if you are in an early stage of knowing God, your participation matters. Do not delay getting involved with your church, because your contribution is part of God's plan. He will use you in ways you won't even be aware.

The time is now *to commit your whole life to God*

- Jesus belongs at the center of your life, not as a peripheral or circumstantial character. **Jeremiah 29:11 & 13** – “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. . . If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.”
- Commitment to Jesus is conscious, deliberate, and ongoing. The **Prodigal Son** story is found in **Luke 15: 11-32**. **Verses 17-20** describe the intentional decision the son made to turn from where he was going and to return to his original home.
- Like the prodigal son, when you make a deliberate decision to turn back toward God, you will likely need to make some priority and scheduling adjustments. That may require some creativity on your part.

The time is now *to surround yourself with right relationships*

- Develop friendships with the right kind of people: those individuals who are committed to their own relationships with God.
- Your church is a good resource for the right relationships.

The time is now *to discover your God-given purpose*

- You will experience true peace in life when you have discovered the reason God created you.
- **Psalm 139:16 – Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. (NKJV)**
- Peace is not found in the size of your problems, it is found in the size of your God.
- It is true that your problems today are no different from those of individuals in every generation since the beginning of time. It is true that life on the planet is cyclical and predictable. Solomon observed that truth when he wrote **Ecclesiastes 1:9 – That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. (NKJV)**
- Even so, God put you together the way He did for a unique purpose. You bring something to the table no one else does. **Ephesians 2:10 – For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (NKJV)**

The time is now *to live your life doing something that matters*

- You will receive peace alongside your purpose.
- God individually created us. Your purpose – and usefulness – is unique to you.
- Some people are purposed for full-time, paid ministry (to get paid for being responsible for the administration of the church's different ministries.)
- Others are purposed to provide a resource for the Church's work through a secular vocation.
- Whichever way is your God-intended way will be guided by Jesus. Jesus is like a good shepherd who cares for the whole flock, but is committed to each of us as individuals. **Luke 15:4-7 – “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” (NKJV)**
- Whichever way is your God-intended way, determine to make your days on earth count for something. **Psalm 90:12 – So teach us to number our days, that we may**

gain a heart of wisdom.

Commit your life to the things that matter

- Put God at the center of your life. Then, grow closer to Him by going deeper in your understanding of Him.
- **Colossians 1:17 – And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (NKJV)**
- Everything starts with God. As you grow in your knowledge of Him the Holy Spirit will enable you to become a better and better person. **2 Corinthians 3:18 – But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**
- Start now by saying “no” to things that need to recede into your life’s background. Say “yes” to the things that have God’s purpose. Put those things front and center.

Reflective Questions for The Shallows – Part 4

1. At the beginning of this message Pastor Stephen contrasted Covenant Church’s vision for you with what the secular world might offer as a vision. In what ways are you attracted to the world’s vision? In what ways are you attracted to Covenant Church’s vision?
2. Is it possible to commit to both visions? If you answered yes, how will you keep God at the center of your life?
3. Why, do you suppose, it takes time and effort to discover your God-given purpose? Why doesn’t God just tell you right off the bat, in simple terms?
4. As you analyze how your life is organized right now, can you identify an area that might need some creative thinking to be put right?