

KEY 2

INTENTIONAL LIVING



Have you ever driven to one of your routine destinations like the grocery store, your child's school, or work, and before you knew it, you'd arrived and wondered how you'd gotten there? Your mind was preoccupied with other things, but you're so familiar with your route that you automatically chauffeured yourself without intentional thought of where you were going. You arrived and thought, "I don't remember turning here or seeing that." That's what I call autopilot driving. I'm sure you do that more often than you realize. I do!

I dare to propose that many of us live our lives that way. We wake up each day and run through our routine of getting dressed, getting kids ready for school, heading to work, picking up the kids, coming home, cooking dinner, helping the kids with homework, maybe catching something on TV, feeding the cat or dog before heading off to bed to start over the next day. Oh, wait a minute—I forgot something. We usually put a load of laundry in to wash and do the dishes somewhere in between! Our lives can become so routine that it doesn't take much thought to get through our day. That's what I call autopilot living.

The huge danger of autopilot living is that we miss out on the journey. We go through our daily schedule and think, “Another day, another dollar.” Life has become so familiar, predictable, and in most cases, boring. As a result, we do what we do without much thought or enjoyment. My friend, you were not created to live in the “same-ol’, same-ol’” cycle the world is caught up in. We, as God’s children, are to be intentional in how we live each day we are given. Our prayer to God should be, “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” Psalm 90:12. I believe that God doesn’t want us to live our days without thinking about what we do. I believe that God wants us to be intentional in how we live.

Intentional means “deliberate, on purpose, planned, intended, determined.” God Himself is intentional. Isaiah 46:10-11 says, “I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.” God means what He does and does what He means. He truly knows everything. Nothing ever catches God by surprise. He never says, “When did that happen?” or “Huh? I didn’t know that!” God knows it all before it ever comes to pass.

Jesus showed us what deliberate living looked like. He was born for a purpose and nothing deterred Him from accomplishing His mission. Even at the tender age of 12, Jesus responded to his mother Mary, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Luke 2:49 (NKJV). Jesus understood why He was here and was intentional about how He lived. How about you?

You might be thinking, *Yeah, but that’s God and Jesus. They can do whatever they want.* I ask you, “Who’s your Daddy?” When you repented of your old sinful life and

accepted Jesus, His Holy Spirit came to reside in you and now His DNA is in you! Romans 8:9 says, “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.” Your spirit has been born again and is able to be led by the Holy Spirit. As you continue renewing your mind, you are able by His grace and the Spirit’s help to live intentionally and purposefully.

That is why we must seek God for His will for our lives and then choose to walk in obedience, one choice at a time. Intentional living requires us to be proactive about our choices and not passive. An example of a passive choice is when my husband asks me, “Where do you want to go to dinner?” and I answer, “Wherever. It doesn’t matter to me.” That’s probably the most frustrating answer I can give (at least to my husband anyway!). I offer no direction or suggestion. I’m willing to go “wherever” even if it means Taco Bell. On the other hand, if I answer, “Olive Garden, and I’ve already made us a reservation for 6:00 p.m.,” I’m being intentional. I know exactly where I want to go and even when we are to arrive.

We need to be careful that we don’t live our lives with the passive attitude of “Whatever. It doesn’t matter to me.” When we go with the flow of “whatever,” the flow oftentimes isn’t very exciting or meaningful. Stop it! Sitting on the sidelines and being a spectator, should not be an option for us. We are not to be the product of whatever life brings, but our lives should be the product of what our faith in Christ brings when we pursue God’s will and direction for our lives.

It is up to you, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to get your daily life off cruise control and wake up to the journey God has laid before you. God doesn’t want you to dread your day, but expect it with anticipation. It is amazing how life becomes an adventure when you wake up every morning saying, “Okay Daddy, what do you have for me today?”

In this section you will see how intentional living means changing your direction, being passionate about your relationships, and taking charge of your life.