

## **The Concept of Purpose and the Role It Plays in Marriage and Success**

“Purpose”, such a heavy word most people use but never understand or fully explain. It’s everywhere; on social media, motivational talks, even in church sermons but what does it really look like in everyday life? What’s its role in marriage and in success? Purpose is not abstract, it is why someone exists, that “responsible urge” to carry out all that you were designed to do, the reason for which something is done. It’s like oxygen. You don’t always notice it’s there, but try living without it, then you realize you can’t breathe.

In *The Principles and Power of Vision*, Miles Munroe states: “*The greatest tragedy in life is not death, but a life without purpose*” (Munroe, 2003). Think about it, if death isn’t the worst thing, then living aimlessly must be. And yet, that’s what so many of us do. We live life with no direction, just going through the motions. Most of us just go through each with no plan, structure or vision. Just routine. Days turn into weeks, weeks into months, months into years, years into decades and then we realize that we’ve accomplished nothing of worth, we become depressed because of deep lack of fulfillment. Munroe asserts that success isn’t necessarily about acquiring wealth or status, it’s about fulfilling purpose. It is about you doing the thing you were actually destined to do. Because if a fish spends its life trying to climb a tree, everyone including the fish will think it’s stupid. But in water, that same fish looks like a genius.

In the context of marriage, Chinyere Oko-jaja writes, “*Oftentimes some people get so busy with the wedding preparation and make light with one of the strong pillars of their union*” (Oko-jaja, 2018). And what happens after the wedding? They wake up months later realizing they built a house on sand. One day you’re “in love,” the next day you’re asking yourself, “why did I even marry this person?” Love is sweet, yes, but love without purpose is like cooking Egusi soup without palm oil, it looks fine at first, but the taste gives it away.

Francine Rivers, in *The Atonement Child*, describes purpose in a different way; through pain. Dynah's life shatters after she was raped. She went through so much struggle with the choice of abortion rearing its ugly head especially as she was been encouraged by the very people she loved the most; her parents, her fiancée and even her roommate Janet. This made her to question and doubt herself and God's purpose for her life. But Rivers writes, "*How many others suffered in silence, too ashamed and too afraid to speak about their pain?*" (Rivers, 1997). That stuck with me. Sometimes, purpose comes when one is going through the storms of life. It doesn't always come when there is joy and happiness. And if that's true in life generally, it's even more true in marriage and in success. Because both will test you. Both will make you question if you made a mistake. Without a deeper "why," you'll crumble.

Let's pause a bit and ask ourselves a question. Is it a must that people "know their purpose" before getting married or before chasing success? *The Atonement Child* shows us that Dynah didn't know her purpose at the start; she discovered it in the fire. This could be your situation at the moment. You may be going through trying times and encountering challenges but all you need to do is to ask God what He wants you to do. Ask him for direction. And this is important, Munroe would argue you at least need direction. He puts it this way: "*Without vision, you have no values to guide your living. Life has no sense of direction*" (Munroe, 2003).

In marriage, Oko-jaja reminds us, "*The number one reason for marriage is to fulfill one's mandate. Therefore anyone, man or woman, entering into marriage must have the understanding of what God is expecting from him or her.*" (Oko-jaja, 2019). Love alone can't carry you through raising children, managing finances or handling in-laws.

Let use this analogy. Purpose is like electricity. Marriage is like running a home, success is like running a shop. Everything relies on constant power, without it, there will be problems. You

can manage with a generator (that's the passion, the honeymoon phase, the vibes), but sooner or later the fuel finishes. If you don't have steady current, that is, purpose, you'll burn out.

Success is not something you pursue, it is a matter of fulfilling God's mandate for your life, becoming a person of value. According to Munroe, *"As long as a person can hold on to his vision, then there is always a chance for him to move out of his present circumstances and toward the fulfillment of his purpose"* (Munroe, 2003). You can earn millions, trend online, get the respect of society, but if it's not tied to purpose, you'll still feel empty. It's not just about achieving goals, it's also about transforming pain into something that counts and that's what success with purpose looks like. Purpose is why we're created. Munroe tells us it's the source of vision, Oko-jaja says it's necessary for marriage, Rivers shows us it can be discovered through suffering.

To fulfill purpose, one needs to ask his/herself some serious questions and take some necessary steps; Who am I? What are my gifts? What am I good at? Write down your answers, and then make plans to refine your strengths. For example, if your purpose is to change lives through speaking, you have to start stepping out and do it. You're probably going to be scared at first, yet God will give you opportunities to speak at different stages so you can develop your gift. You don't even know what you can do until you have to. Some amazing gifts come out of people when they are under pressure. You will need to make a specific decision that you are going to follow through with what you want to do, acknowledging that God may refine your plans as He leads you through the process. Also, commit your vision to God on a regular basis. Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established."

To summarize, let's use this analogy of building a house; purpose is the cement, love is the paint and money, the furniture, Without the cement, the house doesn't stand. Purpose doesn't just make marriage and success possible it makes them worth it.

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## References

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Oko-jaja, C. (2018). *Before and After "I Do"*. Divine Connection Resources.

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