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Roots Of Purpose: Finding Purpose Through Connection

I'd like to believe that we all have a seed of purpose planted in us when we're born. This seed, like all living things, starts off small—delicate and hidden beneath the surface. When we're younger, that purpose is still sprouting from its roots, unseen but growing. It's in the small things—the joy of playing with toys, the comfort of seeing Mom and Dad, or the curiosity we have about all the unknown things around us. In these early stages, our purpose is simple and innocent, not yet fully realized. As we grow, so does that purpose. It starts to become a bud, still closed, not quite fully bloomed yet. But it's there, waiting for the right conditions to bloom.

I, like everyone else, had a seed of purpose. But unlike the others around me, my seed was planted in hard and rocky soil. The seed was there, but how could it sprout in such harsh conditions? There was no water to drink, no sun for warmth. While everyone else's seeds were sprouting in good, fertile soil—being watered consistently, basking in sunlight—my seed was being choked and deprived. Even though I knew deep down I had a seedling of purpose, it was hard to recognize because it couldn't properly grow. I felt like I was withering under the pressure of isolation, doubts, and a lack of direction. Watching others thrive in environments that nourished their purpose only deepened my feelings of inadequacy. I started to believe my life didn't serve any purpose—that it wasn't important. At that time, I desperately needed something, someone, anyone, to

show me that there was a seedling inside of me just waiting for better conditions to sprout.

Thankfully, that prayer was answered.

When I came to college, I had no idea what I was doing. I thought my seed had finally sprouted, but I realized I'd just bought a flower. I purchased my purpose in school and feeling loved by others, be it boys, friends, etc. That "flower of purpose" wasn't my own—it hadn't sprouted from within me. My real seed was still waiting, dormant, for its moment to fully grow. And that moment came slowly, gradually, like the first drops of rain after a long drought. Looking back, I can see how people were placed in my life right when I needed them most. People trickled into my life like water from a watering can, bringing with them small moments of care, guidance, and love. They shined their warmth on me like the sun does to the meadows, helping me to see the parts of myself I had long kept hidden.

One of those "sprinkles" was a person named Joyce.

Joyce was in the CODES program with me, and she brought something special into my life. With her presence, the watering can was being filled. We both shared a common faith in Jesus Christ, and it was through this bond that I started to feel the sun peeking out from behind the clouds. We became friends, and she started going to The Crossings Church. Not long after, she invited me to come too, and I accepted. Little did I know, this simple invitation would become the turning point for my seed. The soil that had once been hard and rocky was softening. It was becoming fertile.

When I came to The Crossings, I thought I had it all together as a Christian. I believed I had already watered and tended to my seed, that it was well on its way to growing. Silly me. In reality, I didn't have a single piece together—not even the corner pieces of the puzzle. I realized then that my seed had been languishing all along. At The Crossings, I finally had something—someone, anyone—to help me truly nurture my seed and give it the nutrients it needed to grow. I didn't realize how difficult it would be to admit that my seed was malnourished, that it had been neglected for so long. The hardest

part was letting people see the soil it was planted in—letting them see the dried, shriveled-up seed and explaining why it hadn't grown. I hated it. It made me feel so broken, like I was beyond repair, like my seed had withered beyond saving.

But they didn't see it that way.

They saw that shriveled seed and somehow saw potential, saw greatness. They encouraged me to look at myself differently, to recognize that even in brokenness, there is strength. Because they had been like me too. Their seeds had once looked just like mine—stunted, dried out, desperate for nourishment. Some of them still had seeds that looked like mine, struggling to find the right environment to grow. In sharing their own stories, they showed me that we all go through seasons of drought, but it's the right community that brings the rain.

That's when I felt it. I'd never felt it before, but I recognized it so clearly, as if it had always been beside me—because it had. I felt my seed of purpose finally start to sprout roots, digging deep into this new, fertile soil. This was the soil it had always belonged in. I could finally understand my purpose: that I was made in the image of God and to live according to His plans.

While my seed had finally sprouted, it still had a long way to go before becoming the flower it was meant to be. The Crossings became the community that helped me cultivate it, helping me to water it and keep it growing. One of the values I love most is their commitment to actively seeking and saving the lost. This value reflects the very core of Jesus's teachings, and at The Crossings, we are held accountable to follow in His footsteps every day. We don't just passively believe; we live out our faith by going out into the world and sharing the love of Jesus with others. We live out the great commission He left us: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Placing my purpose in line with Jesus's is the most fulfilling path I could have chosen, and The Crossings helped me see that. They showed me how to plant my roots deeply in Jesus, so that no storm could uproot me.

Since coming to The Crossings, so much has changed in my life. I've never been surrounded by a community that showed genuine care and love before. I didn't even know what that looked like, or how to show it myself. My faith used to be very passive, but now it's constantly being challenged and pushed to stay active. They didn't just encourage me spiritually but helped me build habits that would allow my faith to remain strong, like regular prayer, studying scripture in small groups, and serving others. They helped me realize that my faith wasn't something to be kept hidden, but something that needed to be shared—just like a flower, once fully bloomed, exists to be seen and appreciated by others.

I never knew what it meant to make disciples or how a disciple should truly live. But now, I can be the light God always wanted me to be because of the community I chose to be part of. And it's not just me—many others at The Crossings have gone through a similar process. To this day, The Crossings continues to push all of us to become better people, to grow in our faith, and to help others along the way. The community doesn't let us sit in stagnation; it waters us when we're dry and prunes us when we need to be reshaped.

I say all this to emphasize that community can make a huge impact on one's sense of purpose. Whether it's a church, a sports team, an honors club—whatever space you find that aligns with your values—find a space that will allow your seed to grow into the beautiful flower it was always meant to be. Because when you are planted in the right soil, surrounded by the right people, and given the proper care, you will bloom in ways you never imagined.