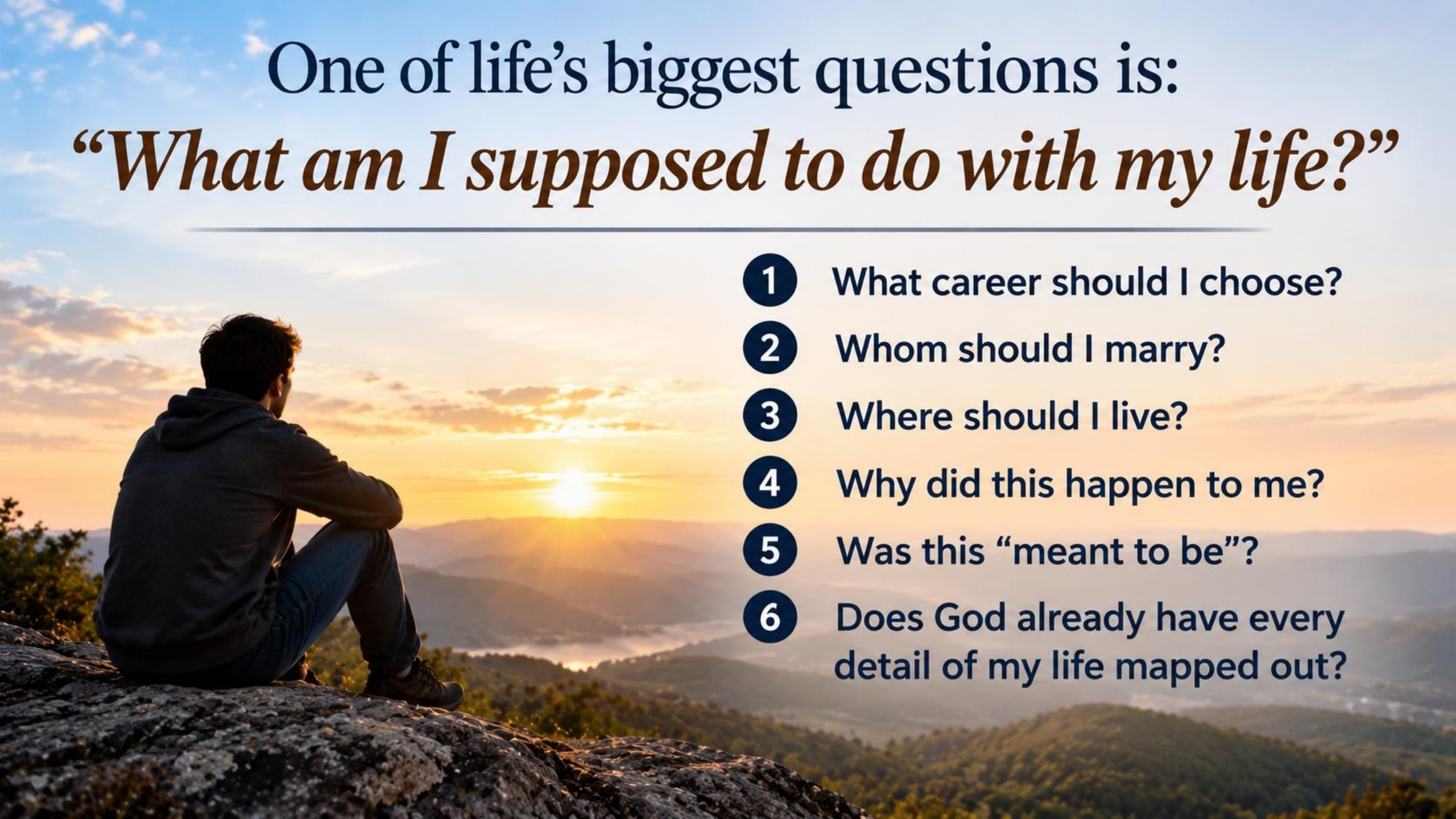




# Welcome

WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE

— BELONG • GROW • SERVE • TOGETHER —

A person is sitting on a rocky cliff, looking out over a valley at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the landscape. The person is wearing a dark hoodie and jeans, and is sitting with their back to the camera.

# One of life's biggest questions is:

## *“What am I supposed to do with my life?”*

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- 1 What career should I choose?
- 2 Whom should I marry?
- 3 Where should I live?
- 4 Why did this happen to me?
- 5 Was this “meant to be”?
- 6 Does God already have every detail of my life mapped out?

Are we living out a  
*predetermined destiny*—  
or are we choosing  
*the direction of our lives?*



*“12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”*

Philippians 2:12 – 13 (ESV)

# God Created Us With *the Ability to Choose*



Throughout Scripture,  
*God calls people to choose.*



Deuteronomy 30:19 (ESV) “19 *I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live,*”

Joshua 24:15 (ESV) “15 *And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*”

Isaiah 1:19 – 20 (ESV) “19 *If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; 20 but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*”

*“37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”*

Matthew 23:37 (ESV)



God's will can therefore be *resisted*.

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Luke 7:30 (ESV)

<sup>30</sup> *but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him."*

REJECTED

# Free Will Means *My Choices Have Real Consequences*



*“7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”*

Galatians 6:7 – 8 (ESV)

# Consider *David:*

- 1 David's adultery with Bathsheba was *not* God's plan for David's life.
- 2 David *chose to sin*.
- 3 And his choice produced *devastating consequences*.
- 4 Yet—and this becomes crucial for the sermon—
- 5 David's sin *did not prevent God from continuing to work*.
- 6 That leads to an important distinction:

*God's ability to use something  
does not mean God caused it.*

*“19 But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? 20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. 21 So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.”*

Genesis 50:19 – 21 (ESV)

# God's Plan Is Not the Same Thing as *“Destiny”*

**GOD'S PLAN**  
PURPOSE • GUIDANCE  
CHOICES • RELATIONSHIP

**DESTINY**  
FATALISM • NO CHOICE  
JUST HAPPENS • NO RESPONSIBILITY



*“28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”*

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

# So, What Is *God's Plan for My Life?*

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*“28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. **29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.** 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”*

Romans 8:28 – 30 (ESV)

# God's Will is Explicitly *Revealed in Scripture.*

1 Thessalonians 4:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> *“For this is the will of God,  
your sanctification.”*

ALL  
SCRIPTURE  
IS GOD-BREATHED  
2 TIMOTHY 3:16



*“8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**”*

Ephesians 2:8 – 10 (ESV)

# God's Plan Includes Opportunities— *But I Must Choose to Walk Through Them*



REVELATION  
3:8

"I HAVE  
SET BEFORE YOU  
AN OPEN DOOR..."



# God Providentially *Opens Doors.*

1 Corinthians 16:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> *for a wide door* for effective work  
has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”

Colossians 4:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> “At the same time, pray also for us, that  
*God may open to us a door for the word,*  
to declare the mystery of Christ, on account  
of which I am in prison.”

*“13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think to yourself that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, 16 “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”*

Esther 4:13 – 16 (ESV)

# My Plans Must Always Be *Submitted to God's Will*



*“13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— 14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15 Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”*

James 4:13 – 15 (ESV)



# The Christian asks:

1 Not merely: “What do I want?”

➔ But: “*What would honor God?*”

2 Not: “What will make me happiest?”

➔ But: “*What will help me become more like Christ?*”

3 Not: “What is my destiny?”

➔ But: “*What has God called me to do today?*”

# God's Ultimate Plan Is Something *I Must Choose to Enter*



*“9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.”*

Ephesians 1:9 – 10 (ESV)



# God desires *everyone to be saved.*

1

1 Timothy 2:3–4 (ESV)

God... “*desires all people to be saved* and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

2

2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

He is... “*not wishing that any should perish,* but that all should reach repentance.”

*“13 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”*

Matthew 7:13 – 14 (ESV)

*“15 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*

Joshua 24:15 (ESV)

God has a plan for your life,  
*will you choose to follow it?*

