

More—Introduction

Quotes from Princes Bride and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4ftmOI5Nnl>

- I. True Love (or True *Wove*, if you have seen the bit with the priest) for Wesley, the main character (the guy who was mostly but not completely dead), that is what makes life worth living. But as Jesus followers, is that the ultimate answer? Romantic love? If it is, what about those millions of people who never find it? Or those who feel like they do, but then it ends in a breakup, divorce or death? Now I am not here to knock romantic love, only to say that it is not penultimate. It's good, but it's not as good as it gets. God and being in profound relationship with Him ultimately satisfies a deep hunger within like nothing else. It's kind of like this. I have a friend (who I will call Andy to protect his identity ☺) that shared how his brother loved to put together puzzles. And being the loving brother, Andy would take a piece from the puzzle his brother was currently working on, and replace it with a piece from another puzzle. He would then watch when his brother got to the very end and tried to cram that final piece into the puzzle to make it fit. Funny thing...it never did. The same goes with this God-shaped hole in our lives. Romantic love, success in our career, even family are all good things but they still don't fill this deep longing, this void, that belongs to God alone. Anything else simply doesn't fit, no matter how hard we cram.

- II. And that brings us to this series *More* based on the book of the same title by Todd Wilson, a very successful nuclear engineer who gave up his lucrative career to pursue his calling. I will say more about that in the weeks to come. There are two underlying Scriptural truths that form the basis of this series. The first is this. It comes from **Ephesians 2:10** and it reads in the **The Message** (*only include the last sentence which is actually v.10*). Who created us? God did. For what purpose? To join Him in His work which is good. We were made with a meaning. This statement was profound when Paul wrote those words to the church at Ephesus in the first century. And those words are still profound now. Whether we believe that we are at the end of a chain of billions of years of an evolutionary biological process or were created in literally seven days, it doesn't really matter. Paul is saying that we are not some cosmic accident, just a freak amalgam of DNA spinning in a cold soulless universe, but were made by a loving master designer to benefit humankind. **1)** So first premise of our series is that **all of us are created by God to do something important.**

- III. The second Scripture and biblical premise is **John 10:10 NRSV**. Do you see this? (*Mug and pitcher of water*) The abundant life that Jesus promises is a life that is overflowing, full of goodness, of joy, of peace and love. Not semi-full. Not even full to the brim. But full to overflowing, spilling over, getting everything wet around it. Now let's not get that confused with riches, status, and a pain free life. Jesus and the first disciples certainly didn't get that and we shouldn't expect that either, but an abundant life...yes. It's kind of like this. I usually don't watch the Today show, I am more of a news channels guy, but my oldest daughter prefers that in the morning. The other day host Hodor ☺ or Hoda did something really cool. I missed how it all came about...something about celebrating ordinary heroes. In this particular segment she found this guy who I will call Jim. Not to protect his identity, I just can't remember the guy's name. Jim had been volunteering at the Salvation Army for like two decades. In cahoots with Jim's wife, Hoda surprised him in a really touching way. They

told Jim that they were putting on a picnic for the homeless and asked him to cook for it as he normally did. But then they brought in his favorite food channel chef, some guy I never heard of but I guess he is like a rock star to the foodies, and then they shared with Jim that this was all to celebrate him and his service to the community for all these years. Now that was heartwarming. But it got even better. They began parading one guy after another holding up card board signs. All these guys at one point or another were homeless but Jim had helped them along the way. One guy's sign read, "Been drug free for 15 years because of Jim." Another, "Now married and have my own home because of Jim." And another, "Going to college because of Jim". Ok I have to admit that my "allergies" came on with a vengeance. Man moisture. Okay, I was crying folks. This is a safe place, right? The point? When I hear that Jesus says that He came to bring life and have it to the full, an overflowing life, I think of people like Jim who are experiencing just that. Not because Jim is wealthy, driving around in a Lamborghini, or is in a billionaires club, but he is finding a deep abiding joy and peace because he is sharing God's presence with the world. So the second premise of this series is that **all of us are created for a full overflowing life.**

- IV. But here is the question that, not to be overly dramatic, should haunt us as we move through these weeks together. Haunt us and then push us to dive deeper... **"Do I wish there was more?"** In other words do I wish there was more than just waking up every day, getting the kids to school, getting a shower, shave and breakfast, drinking 2000 milligrams of caffeine in some form or another, and then putting 8, 9, 10, or 11 hours in at the office, school, hospital, factory or wherever to come home exhausted, only to wake up and do it all again the next day? Are we experiencing an abundant life and an opportunity to do something important, the reason we were created, or is our life simply about making the money to pay the bills? Do we wish there was something *more*? And if we do, how can we discover it? Let us listen to the following interview with Richard Stearns by Pastor Bill Hybels. Richard came out of a broken home with an abusive father and absent mother. He grew up in abject poverty and literally was a guy who pulled himself up by his bootstraps. By sheer hard work and determination he graduated from Cornell and then Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. He became a Christ follower while there (and he says that he thinks he is the only guy to become a Christian at Wharton as they generally follow a different god.) Immediately after graduation he was picked up by Hasbro Toy Company and by the time he was 33, he was the CEO of this multimillion dollar corporation with over a thousand employees. After a few years he was then hired by Lennox who makes fine china I am told...which was an even larger company with more financial resources and more employees. Rich, at this point, had everything. His dream home, beautiful wife and family, and was on track to retire at the age of 55 and moving of course to Florida. Where else, right? But listen what happened.
- (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WMHEzWQE8k> **beginning at 6:32 till the end.**) You hear the struggle? At one level Rich was living a life of abundance, at least as defined by our society, but there was something he was missing. A chance to be *more*. And he found that *more* by becoming the president of World Vision that helps around 70 million people every year with everything from medical needs, hunger, housing and sharing the

good news about Jesus. A life in Boca laying on a beach, or helping 70 million people. Which would we say is truly the abundant life?

- V. Bob Buford, the guy who wrote the books *Halftime* and *Love Does*, was mentored by management guru Peter Druker, who didn't only teach him about business but more so about life. Bob told Todd Wilson, "When we die we will have to answer two questions: 1) **What did we do with who Jesus says He is?** and 2) **What did we do with what He gave us to work with?** This goes back to that Richard Stearns' interview. The question behind the question. If Jesus is really my Lord, am I willing to do ____ (fill in the blank)? According to Todd Wilson, Bob has a picture of a pitcher of water on the wall. (**image**) It is there to remind him that we are to be poured into and to be poured out. And this is our calling. Yes, we all have to pay the bills in some way or another, but if we are Jesus followers we all also have a calling. As Wilson describes, "**Calling is fundamentally about having the fullness of Jesus in me overflowing and carrying that fullness to others.**" Again think of the mug of water being filled up to overflowing so we can fill the mugs around us. According to Wilson, throughout history Christians have identified two aspects of calling. **Primary** is the Jesus fullness in us. **Our relationship with God.** We are all called to walk in close connection with Jesus, being filled with His presence. This is for everybody, all Christians, whether you are a pastor or CEO of your multi-billion company. **Secondary calling** is our unique equipping that distinguishes us from others based on our spiritual gifts, our passion or interest, and how we are wired. This is the pouring out into other people part. It's kind of like this. Warning. I am about to use a sports analogy. I say that because invariably I will mess this up but it never stops me from trying! How many people saw the Panther- Bronco game? I know...painful, right? But for every member of the Panthers team, their primary calling that night was to get the football into the Bronco's end zone. Even Luke Kuechly who plays defense (impressed, aren't you? Wikipedia is a beautiful thing!)...his primary calling was to move the ball into their end zone while keeping it out of the Panther's. But each player has a secondary calling. How that is played out. The way the kicker does it, of whose name I won't mention this morning...I am still bitter, is very different than how Cam Newton gets the job done. The same with the Christian faith. Our primary calling is the same. To be filled with the presence and love of God in Jesus Christ. But how we pour that out to others looks different. I get up here on Sunday morning and preach/teach. That is one of the ways I pour out. You might pour into other people by praying for them and writing encouraging texts or facilitating a growth group, leading a mission trip to Belize, or provide meals for the children here at Meadowlark. Start a ministry to those in homeless. Whatever. But all of us are called, even if our calling looks different in how we live it out.
- VI. But according to Wilson there are three barriers that can keep us from our calling. **Barrier 1 The Noise in our life is drowning out God.** We are so busy with our own stuff or own "have to's" or "want to's" we simply can't hear God's calling on our life. It's kind of like being in a restaurant with music blaring through the speakers and a dozen TV's hanging on the walls and your boss is trying to talk to you. Sure you could go outside or try to tune all the noise out but sometimes we simply don't want to hear what they have to say. Again this goes back to the Richard Stearns interview. He really didn't want to go to that lunch did he? The

second barrier that can keep us from our calling is that we often **use the wrong scorecard**. We think we are winning in life by looking at our bank account, the title on our door, or the number of people who report to us, when in the end that really won't matter, will it? Can you see Peter at the gate of heaven saying, "Oh wait... you mean that you had the corner office with the window? Jesus, give this gal or guy the celestial suite!" And the **third barrier** to our calling according to Wilson is our tendency to **bury our talents**. Again, think about Richard. His immediate reaction was "I can't do that!" Was it because he truly thought he couldn't? I mean the guy was made CEO of a large corporation at 33! I believe deep down he did. He simply didn't want to have to change his lifestyle. Sometimes it is the fear of failure or thinking we can't do it, but often it's because we don't want to be bothered, right? As a pastor for over 15 years now I can tell you that so many Jesus followers ignore their secondary calling because they think someone else should or will do it. But let me tell you what happens. Either it (whatever it may be) doesn't happen or it is picked up by someone who is already doing too many things so it doesn't go well for the ministry or the person who is already juggling umpteen ministry jobs. This happens when we ignore not only our primary calling to walk in close connection with God and be filled to overflowing, but also when we don't live out our secondary calling to fill other people.

- VII. Here is where all this is going. As many of you know, I am a big fan of the 80's. I love 80's fashion with the big hair (**image**), fashion (**image**), toys (**image**), movies (**image**) and of course music (**image**) Honestly, I really don't want any of that back, especially the hair, with the exception of the tunes. My wife Meg and I still love 80's music. It just never gets old to us. To our children it's like garlic to a vampire but we still love listening to Van Halen, REO Speed Wagon and our fav U2. And no song captures U2 more than *I still haven't found what I am looking for*. Listen to the first few lines: "*I climbed the highest mountains I have run through the fields Only to be with you Only to be with you I have run I have crawled I have scaled these city walls These city walls Only to be with you But I still haven't found What I'm looking for.*" And that gets us to the heart of this series. I believe many, maybe most, Jesus followers still haven't found what they are looking for. We are living not lives of abundance but lives of scarcity. Deep down we want something *more*. We were created by God for a purpose. To do something important for His kingdom. Not just exist and consume Apple products no matter how cool they may be. And my hope is that as we continue this series for the next several weeks, we can all discover our specific calling. How are you and I exactly designed to change the world? Because as much as I love U2, I don't want to get to the end of my life still humming that tune and thinking, "I still haven't found what I am looking for." There is *more* to this life and let's discover that together.