Finding the unique purpose God has for my life

‘Think of yourself for a moment. *There is no one on this earth who is like you*. This may be just as well, but it is true. You may have an identical twin who was removed at birth for all you know, but there is not, and cannot ever have been, nor will there ever be, a person who is exactly like you. Even if someone has exactly the same genes and chromosomes, the environment in which he (or she) grew up will have been different and so they will become a different person. It is not possible for someone else to have the same loves and hates and lusts and fears and anxieties and hopes and desires as you yourself have. You are unique, you are yourself and there never has been, or can be, someone who is just like you, or who fills your place in the world’ (Gonville ffrench- Beytagh, *Encountering Light,* 17).

In what different ways have nature and nurture (genes and experience) combined to make you the person you are today? Reading Psalm 139:13-16, can you thank God for the way in which he has crafted and shaped who you are? Have you ever wished he had made you differently? None of us is perfect! If there are flaws and imperfections in your character, what part do you think these play in God’s plan and purpose for your life? How do you feel about the psalmist’s belief that, ‘All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be’? Does that mean that everything about our life has been pre-determined, or does God know in advance what will happen to us, or is the psalmist simply saying that faith in God’s providence means that there is no need to be afraid of the future?

There will be times in all of our lives when things go wrong, sometimes very badly. In Romans 8:28, there is a promise that ‘in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose’ (NIV). Can you believe this? Have you ever found it to be true in your experience?

Reading Ephesians 1:11-12, why has God chosen us? Reading 2 Timothy 1:8-9, why has God saved us and called us?

To what extent (if at all!) do you think we are capable of frustrating God’s plans and purposes for our lives? Do you think God ever has to adjust what he had in mind for us when we get it wrong? Going back to Psalm 139, take a look at vv. 1-6. If God knows what I am going to say before I utter a word, does that mean I am not a free agent? A paradox has been defined as ‘a statement in which it seems that if one part of it is true, the other part of it cannot be true.’ One such statement might be, ‘I am free to choose what I say and do and yet God knows in advance what I will say and do.’ Are both elements in this statement true? Do they contradict each other? Can they be reconciled? Do we have to learn to live with this paradox, just as we have to accept that light behaves both like a wave and like a particle? Does truth sometimes defy logic? Whether you can get your head round it or not, can you use Psalm 139:1-6 to worship God?

Looking ahead for the next five years, how much can you see of God’s plan and purpose for your life? The capacity for exercising forethought and planning ahead is one of the gifts God has given us: he does not expect us simply to blunder through life. We can and should be proactive agents, rather than just passively reacting to whatever happens to us. What practical steps can you take (should you take?) to discover God’s will and purpose for your future, and how can you prepare and equip yourself for this?

Where there is no vision, the people run wild, but blessed is the one who follows divine instruction (Proverbs 29:18).

‘Father, we pray that you would remind us that that we are all a part of building and expanding your Kingdom. We ask that you give us a fresh vision for your purpose for our lives. We ask that you open our eyes, our ears, our hearts, and our minds to your vision so that we can live out our purpose. Remove anything from our lives that hinders us from discerning your vision. We pray that you would draw us closer to you as you bring us revelation to our purpose. Please reveal to us what we need to do today to not run wild, but rather be focused on your divine vision. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.’ (www.abbaconnect.net)