

Contents



1. Your Mission (Should You Choose to Accept It)	8
2. Putting a Leash on My Chihuahua Mentality	18
3. waiting on Mission Control.....	34
4. You're a Loser	48
5. Purpose Stories.....	62

Notes: 77

Acknowledgments: 78



My name is Erin. I'm a Milk Dud-loving momma who is passionate about a few things, including (in no particular order) my family, the perfect scoop of ice cream, God's Word, a simple life on my little farm, and teaching young women to choose God's Truth.

I bet you're a passionate girl too. Maybe you share my love for farm living and own a horse or two. Maybe you're a writer like me, who gets jazzed about words, stories, and blog posts. Maybe you are especially passionate about children or there's a corner of the world that tugs at your heartstrings. Perhaps you are passionate about a certain band or sports team, fashion, or a well-brewed caramel latte. No matter who you are or where you live, I'm sure there are things that cause your pulse to race and your heart to go pitter-patter.



Some of our passions are simply a byproduct of our environment. We love what our parents love; we get jazzed about whatever makes our friends tick. But I have a theory that there are other passions, the ones that ooze from our very core, that have been woven into our hearts by a passionate God with a passionate plan to take the world by storm. Okay, it's not really my theory. God outlines our mission clearly in His Word. We'll get to that soon.



How can we know which passions are God-given? What should we do with those passions? Should we bridle them or let them run free, giving them reign over the way we live our lives and the choices we make for the future? Is passion a fire we should seek to control or something we should let consume our entire lives?

These are questions I've tried to wrestle to the ground since I was a little girl. (That's me in the fourth grade.)

Like a Chihuahua on a leash, I've bounced back and forth from place to place seeking to find my passion and then wondering what do next. I want to be turned loose with the things that most excite me, but I feel gently pulled back by a God who seems to desire to direct my passions for use in His bigger story.

Speaking of God, why did He make me? What is my purpose on this planet? Do my passions have anything to do with that?

These questions won't win me any awards for originality. People in every culture in every age have wondered, "What am I here for?" As one of billions of people on one planet in one solar system in one of many galaxies, I naturally search for significance. Self-help books tell us to find the answer within ourselves, but those books miss something huge—the God who created us. His Word says that we were created on purpose.



Isaiah 43:7 talks about His people: “Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Read that passage backward. You were made and formed by God. Why? For His glory. Your purpose on this planet is tied to the God who made you. God and your purpose in life cannot be separated.

With that in mind, is God’s heart the best place to take our passions? Is He in charge of deciding our purpose? Will He show us what it looks like to be created for His glory?

I’ve opened the Bible and asked God to answer these questions and to show me my purpose. I’ve squeezed my passions through the grid of God’s Word. The result is a plan to live *on mission*, finding my purpose in using my God-given passions to do kingdom work.



My name is Erin
and this is my story.



Check out these
hilarious titles of
real self-help books:

The Zombie Survival Guide:
Complete Protection from
the Living Dead

Things I’ve Learned from
Women Who’ve Dumped Me

Faking It: How to Seem
Like a Better Person
without Actually
Improving Yourself



Your Mission (Should You Choose to Accept It)

God has a purpose for your life.

That may sound like a cheesy bumper sticker or a mushy Hallmark card, but that single sentence can radically change your life. You are not an accident. Your life is not a series of coincidences strung together between birth and death. Nope. God has a mission for you. And much like the famous spy in *Mission Impossible*, you have the choice to accept your mission or simply let it self-destruct.

From here on out, you'll read the phrase "living on mission" a lot. Sounds like more spy talk! What does it mean? Living on mission is living on purpose. It is the opposite of floating through life, finding meaning here and there. Living on mission means building a life based on a goal. We will dig up the specifics of that goal in the chapters of this book, but for now, living on mission simply means to do what God made you to do.

Since no mission-minded girl should ever face the world alone, let me introduce you to some girls I know you're gonna love. Before I started writing this book, some friends and I traveled the nation interviewing

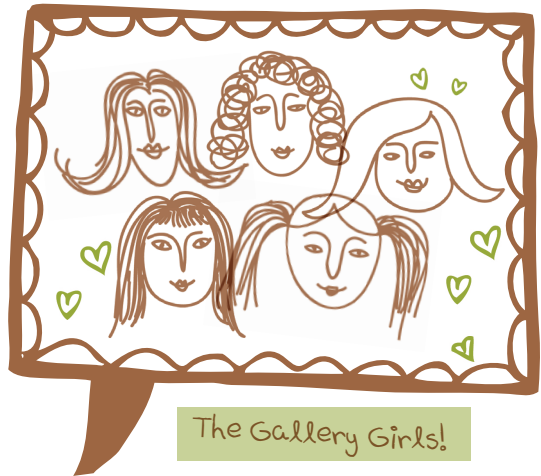


There's an app for self-destructing messages. Software makers have developed a free iPhone app that sends messages that delete themselves within seconds. Now you see it. Now you don't.

girls just like you about what it means to live life on a mission. We went to big cities and small towns and everywhere in between. The girls we talked to had been exposed to plenty of Christian talk. They know how to talk the talk about God and purpose. (I call that speaking Christianese.) The girls went to different schools and had different interests, but they had something in common: They wanted their lives to matter. They longed to be a part of something bigger than themselves. But they weren't quite there . . . yet.

They also loved to talk. That's why I've nicknamed them the **Gab Gallery**. From here on out, I'll just call them the Gallery. You'll hear their stories and read their thoughts throughout the pages of this book. Their role is to make you feel like you are part of a conversation about finding purpose (because you are!).

The Gallery girls loved talking about purpose. Of all the subjects we covered with them, purpose got them the most excited (then they really started talking). In fact, these were girls with passions for big causes like Kids Against Hunger, Compassion International, and Invisible Children.



We're not talking about lemonade stands and helping little old ladies across the street here! These girls saw the value in causes that influenced millions of lives. And yet, everywhere we went, there was a gap between the Gallery girls' passions and living their lives with a mission in mind. These girls were passionate, but they had a sideline mentality. "I will cheer you on" was their general attitude about anything big that was happening for the kingdom.

"Grown-ups are given all the credit if I do something big," they said.

"It's assumed that adults are just more sophisticated and smarter. They assume that we won't understand," they said when pressed about why they aren't living on mission now.

The Gallery girls said they wanted to live their lives on mission, but there was this sense that living on mission was something they would do later and that God had big plans for them "someday." They thought that mission-minded living was for people with

college degrees, fancy jobs, and fat bank accounts. Sure, they prayed and read their Bibles, but putting their faith into action was for later. They knew a lot about God's Word, but they didn't yet base their decisions on God's Truth.



Find out more about
the Gallery girls' passions
on these websites:

kidsagainsthunger.org

Compassion.com

invisiblechildren.com

girlscouts.org

Hello. It's God Calling.

I became a Christian when I was fifteen. From then on, I was fascinated by people who did big things with their faith. I told anyone who would listen to me that God was going to use me to do something important too, but I didn't have a clue what that would look like. I admired missionaries who sold everything to reach needy people in faraway lands. I adored pastors who passionately preached God's Word to the masses. I loved the Mother Teresas and Billy Grahams who did radical things for the kingdom. The giants of the faith often talked about feeling "called." It was as if God sent an assignment directly to their smartphone, and they answered, "Yes, Lord!" Now, that's living on mission!

But me? I had math homework. I had a curfew. I had parents who seemed more interested in how clean my bedroom was than if I was living out my God-given purpose. From the very moment I became a Christian, I wanted to do big things for God, yet what was my purpose exactly? How could I live on mission when I was still so young?

And so I waited. I waited for tools I did not need and missed out on an exciting mission that only required obedience to God and His Word.

If I had a time machine, I'd go back and do things differently.

I don't have a time machine, but maybe I don't need one. This book isn't just about me. It's a chance to rewrite the pages of your own story, a chance to take it from an average tale to the kind of epic adventure that

only gets written about girls who live their lives for something bigger than themselves. It doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't matter if you've got a stack of homework to do. It doesn't matter if you're on the volleyball team, the honor roll, or the list of who's most likely to succeed.



God's got a purpose for your life. You are called to do important things just like the people who seem like giants of the faith. The question is, will you shift your thinking toward God's view of purpose? Will you let Him shape your passions into a mission for His glory?

There's that word again—*passion*. I know we just met, but I'm going to make a prediction. I bet there is a connection between what you're passionate about and the mission God wants to call you to. Or maybe God has set a passion deep inside your heart. It's lying there dormant, waiting for you to seek God's plan for the way you live your life from this point forward.

With that in mind, we will use passion as a starting point. In the space below write down the things you are most passionate about. Now, don't speak Christianese. *Don't write down a churchy answer that you think might impress your Sunday school teacher* (I doubt she will be reading your list). Get real about what really excites you. If you don't have a passion yet, that's okay. God wants to show you His passion in the pages of His Word, and it's contagious. It won't be long until you've got something really cool to be passionate about.



I am passionate about:



That list is just a beginning, a springboard to send us off in search of our purpose. Before we launch too high, we'd better take a minute to check in with mission control.

So put down your book for a minute and ask God to use this book to show you His purpose for your life. Your prayer might sound something like this: "God, thank You for creating me to bring glory to You. I'm not sure exactly what that means, but I want my life to matter. I want You to use me to do something big. Would You show me my purpose through Your Word?"