



WEEK 1: AMBITION

BIG IDEA:

Your desire to aspire comes from God because we were made on purpose for a purpose.

INTRO:

Here's a question I think about from time to time, and I'm not sure why, do you think this too, or am I just weird? (It's okay if I am.) What if I could get a visit from Future Me? Not crazy into the future, Retired Me. Just a few years ahead, me.

What if we could get a visit like that and get some insight? Maybe just a heads up on what to avoid. Or maybe some peace of mind that Future Me looks great.

Whether or not you think about a visit from Future You, we all have ambition. We all have things that we hope to accomplish or become in the future. We dream and scheme about the future. We think about paths and opportunities we could take and what we could become.

And we think about becoming a success. We don't want to fail, we want to win at the game of life. We want to be accepted, loved, esteemed, and verified.

On Instagram, being "Verified" is a sign of popularity and status. What would "verify" your life? Is it a blue checkmark on Instagram because you have 100 thousand followers? Is it making a lot of money one day so you can buy a lot of things? Is it dating a model?

How do you define success? What is it that would make you successful? What would make your life great? What do you consider personal success?

Over the next 5 weeks, we're going to talk about what verifies you. How you define success. What drives you and what you are driven for.

TENSION:

For many of us, the answer to that may be the one thing that's driving our ambition. Your drive may be fueled from a fear of failure. What if I don't get into a good school? What if my band doesn't make it big? What if she dumps me?

So fear may motivate us forward as we hope that we're not a bust.

Los Angeles context: *For some of you, since we're in the backyard of the entertainment industry, are already pursuing careers in that field. Recently, one of you told me a story of after you wrapped on shooting a music video, you were walking with one of the bigger names through the mall, and a group of girls recognized him, ran up, and asked for a picture. And to your dismay, they turned and asked you to be the one to take the photo!*

I had to deal with the popularity battle just inside my high school. But you're dealing with the fame of people your age in the industry. You know someone who does what you do that's younger and more famous and it causes you insecurity. Being the best dancer in your high school isn't even on your radar, your eyes are set on being a working actor, booking a commercial, or a tv show.

Chances are, whatever you're driven towards, there is a reason behind why you're driven towards it. And whatever your motive is, whether it's fear of failure or desire for fame, you may feel like you don't know how or where you can talk about your ambition. You may be worried that if you said something in your small group, you'd get made fun of or that people would think you think you're better than them.

So ambition a lot of times stays internal. We're scared to admit what we want to accomplish because it make us too vulnerable, or sound too conceited, or too shallow.

So even though we all deal with ambition, a fear of failure, and dreams for the future, we don't typically talk about it too much.

TRUTH:

Well, the good news is that God actually started this conversation for us. Your desire to aspire didn't start with you. In fact, we can take it all the way back to the beginning.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:28 ESV)

The word for subdue means to "cultivate or produce." So from the beginning, God wanted people to live lives that cultivate, produce, and are fruitful.

Our desire to innovate, create, accomplish, design, build, motivate, do, or lead may be coming from God. Your desire to aspire may be because God wired you to cultivate and produce. But it gets even better.

Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. (Genesis 2:19 ESV)

God put Adam in the garden and brought the animals to him. Adam had to name them. God assigned Adam work. Yeah, God could have done it all but he wanted to work with Adam. Adam had a shared purpose with God.

So that purpose to cultivate and produce—God didn't leave people alone to figure it out and work it out. God said to Adam, "Work with me."

What that tells me is that not only did God wire you for ambition, he's a partner with you in living out your purpose.

Purpose is a partnership with God.

Your ambition is tied to your sense of purpose. If you don't see purpose to your life, you'll probably struggle to have ambition. And, if you only see yourself as your purpose for your life, you'll probably have ambition, but it won't be a partnership with God.

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APPLICATION:

So if we're scared to say what we are ambitious for to each other, why not start the conversation with God. Ask him what he's ambitious for. Ask God why he made you ambitious and what he thinks you should be driven for.

Instead of going at it alone, what if you asked the one that made you for a purpose exactly what that purpose is?

Remember ambition is linked to purpose. If you know why he made you on purpose and if you know what purposes he made you for, you can partner with God in your ambition.

When it comes to your ambition, you can partner with God. After all, he said you're his masterpiece. Let's give him the brush and see what he wants to make.

How can you partner with God? One way you can start this partnership is by asking God to show you purpose behind what you're already doing. If he made you on purpose for a purpose. Or as Paul said, for these "good works." Why not ask him what current good works he has for you?

What if your ambition on your football team was a partnership with God? What if your ambition in the classroom was so that you could live for the purposes God has for you? If you are a purpose-partner with God, what does that do to how you approach your normal, every day life?

Let's not shy away from being ambitious, but instead let's figure out what we should be ambitious for. Because our desire to aspire comes from God because he made us on purpose for a purpose.

TRANSITION TO GROUPS.