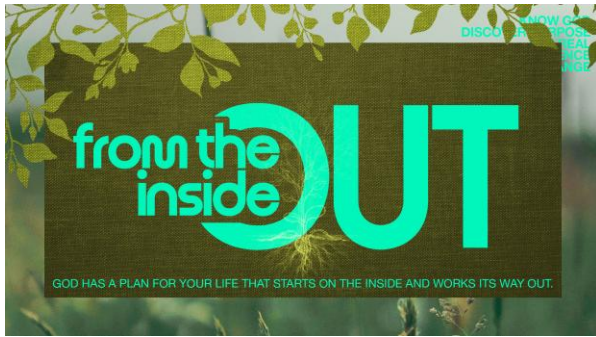




STUDY GUIDE: August 30, 2026
Message Series: From the Inside Out
Message Title: You Are Not An Accident
Teaching Pastor: Brian Hughes

Warm-Up / Icebreaker (10 min.)

If you could be instantly “really good” at one thing—something you’re not currently skilled at—what would you choose? Why?

Pray:

Heavenly Father, thank You for creating each of us intentionally and uniquely. Thank You that our lives are not accidents and that You have a purpose for every person in this room. Help us see ourselves the way You see us—not through comparison, insecurity, or our own plans, but through Your design. Open our hearts as we explore the gifts, passions, abilities, personalities, and experiences You have given us. Help us discover how You want to use our lives for Your purposes and give us the courage to follow where You lead. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Get Started: (30 min.)

- Pastor Brian began by comparing our spiritual lives to a building. What stood out to you about the Citicorp Center story, and how did the hidden structural flaw connect to the way we build our lives spiritually?

Read Ephesians 1:4 & Psalm 139:15–16.

- What does it mean to you personally to think that God knew you and chose you before the creation of the world? How might that change the way you see your identity and your purpose?

“You are not an accident. You are not a mistake or a result of luck, good or bad. It wasn’t fate or chance. Your life isn’t just the result of biology. You may have been a surprise to your parents, but you were no surprise to God.” — Pastor Brian Hughes

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–7.

- Pastor Brian emphasized that every Christ follower has been given a spiritual gift and that no gift is more valuable than another. Why is it important to understand both **what your gift is** and **that your gift is meant to contribute to the body of Christ**?

Reflect and Commit: (40 min.)

SHAPE: Spiritual Gift, Heart, Ability, Personality, Experience

Pastor Brian described five components that can help us discover how God has uniquely designed us:

S — Spiritual Gift - What has God gifted you to do?

God gives spiritual gifts to His people for the common good. Gifts can include leadership, teaching, mercy, encouragement, discernment, wisdom, and others.

H — Heart - What do you care deeply about?

Your heart represents your passions—the things that stir something inside you, the needs or people you care deeply about, and the things you genuinely love doing.

A — Ability - What skills has God allowed you to develop?

Abilities are skills you develop over time. They may include things like teaching, organizing, writing, building, cooking, leading, communicating, working with numbers, or caring for others.

P — Personality - How has God uniquely wired you?

Your personality is part of God's design. We are not all wired the same way, and we shouldn't feel pressured to become someone we were never created to be.

E — Experience - What has God brought you through that He might use?

Your experiences—including both victories and failures, good experiences and painful ones—can become part of the way God works through your life.

- Of the five parts of SHAPE—**Spiritual Gift, Heart, Ability, Personality, and Experience**—which one do you feel you understand best about yourself? Which one do you need to explore more?

Read Romans 8:28.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

- Think about your own experiences—both good and difficult. Can you identify a time when God used something from your past to help shape or prepare you for something He was doing in your life?

"Wins and triumphs go together with failures and defeats. All of them form a treasure of experience that is unique to you that God can work for good." — Pastor Brian Hughes

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 & Read Romans 12:4–6.

- How does understanding that we are all different parts of the body of Christ change the way you think about your own contribution—and the contributions of people who are different from you?

"I don't want you to be me. I want you to be you." — Pastor Brian Hughes

- Why can comparison become a barrier to discovering and living out our God-given purpose? Where are you most tempted to think, "Why can't I be more like...?"

Read Philippians 1:12.

- Paul recognized that even difficult experiences could be used to advance the gospel. How might God want to use something you have experienced—good or bad—for His purposes?

Gather Prayer Requests: (5–10 min.)

Pray:

Father, thank You that we are not accidents. You created us on purpose and for a purpose. Thank You for the unique gifts, passions, abilities, personalities, and experiences You have woven into each of our lives. Help us stop comparing ourselves to others and instead embrace the way You have designed us. Give us wisdom to recognize how You want to use our SHAPE for Your Kingdom. Help us surrender our own plans and goals so we can discover Your purpose for our lives. Use even our difficult experiences for Your good, and help us live fully into the people You created us to be. May our lives point people toward Jesus and make a difference wherever You have placed us. In Jesus' name, Amen.