

## Living a Life of Purpose

### \_Prayer\_

I have spoken a lot lately about moving forward in God, who God is; why we serve him, discipleship etc... but many people are still left with questions. What is my purpose, why am I here, what is Gods will for my life? Does he have a will for me? Why doesn't the pastor tell me?

Let's start off with purpose

### Your Purpose

How many people know that God really does have a purpose for you individually, even if you don't know what it is right now? There are no spare parts in the body of Christ, but where do I belong?

When we look around at others sometimes it seems that they have found their life purpose. Some people think that it means to do something that you truly love and it feels natural for you. And to be honest this is often the case, but what happens if you haven't identified any particular talent or love that you think you excel in, or you are doing something that you love and you still feel empty inside?

Have you ever thought to yourself – Is this all that God has for me or worse does God have anything for me? Have you even thought you were the only person who felt like this?

Thanks a lot of questions, but if you see yourself in them, I ask you to consider this:

**Jesus wants you to be truly happy and have an abundant life, even more than you do.**

Consider with me if you will the Apostles of Jesus. These guys came from a lot of working class backgrounds. Some disciples were from the upper class and others from the lowest scum in society. Why do you think Jesus chose such a diversity of people as his disciples?

**To show us that everyone qualifies...**

Andrew, Peter, James and John were fishermen, earning a living and providing for their families, Mathew was a tax collector for the Roman oppressors of the Jews. Philip, Thomas, James, Judas, Simon, and Judas occupation is unknown. Perhaps they were tradesmen of some sort. , Bartholomew was of royal blood. Paul was a text maker. My point is that these guys were making a living and taking care of their families, but something was missing inside...

**... Back to you**

**What are the steps to finding your life purpose?**

**Step 1: Read Your Bible & Pray**

Actually pull out, blow the dust off your Bible and read it. If you have a version you don't understand, get one you do. I'd suggest NLT or CEV as they are both excellent and in modern English.

## **Step 2: Love one another**

Just like Jesus said to his disciples in John 13:34-35:

<sup>34</sup> “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

This means that you need to look beyond your personal circle and establish relationships with people who are unkind, and you don't like. It also means that you have to forgive people who have offended you and make it right to those who you offend.

This is all well and good but how does it answer the question of my purpose in life?

This is the foundation for everything you will do as a Christian. You learn to love God with all your Heart, Mind and Soul and you learn to love your neighbour as yourself. The fact is when you get this right everything else falls into place. It is the foundation of your Christianity. Do you build it on sand or the Rock of Jesus Christ? When you can do this, automatically you also develop skills in hearing from God. If he can use you and work through you, he will. God doesn't interfere with our choices. You want to serve him you have to choose to do what he says. It is through the process of God working through you that you will discover your true purpose in life.

I always have challenging things to throw out and today is no change... If you feel that you are a good Christian and you still don't know what your true purpose in life is then what do you do?

**Bread rolls on standby...**

## **Step 3: Stop being Self-Centered**

Being a really good Christian means to stop thinking about you all the time. Try to be a blessing to someone else. There is no better way to hear from God and receive direction than focusing on someone else.

If your attitude is still: “If I don't look out for my family and number 1, who will?” then you have a problem question for which you really do need an answer... The answer is God will do you trust him?

## **Step 4: Get Involved and start looking**

**When you invest in someone else, God is invests in you.**

To find your purpose in God; means to find part of the Body of Christ. We are a team, we walk together with God. Here are ten suggestions to help you:

- 1) Search your heart
- 2) Read your bible
- 3) Pray
- 4) Be courageous and try new things

- 5) Be patient
- 6) Don't waste your time on things that you know are not from God
- 7) Have a servant's heart
- 8) Don't get talked into stuff that God hasn't told you to do (you won't know if you're not praying)
- 9) Don't give up
- 10) Evaluate, pray, read, seek his face and if what you are doing not for you, plug back in elsewhere

If this isn't enough here are some practical insights:

Consider the following:

But keep in mind that "God doesn't always call the qualified, he qualifies the called."

- What are your qualifications for what you want to do?
- Do you have any related experience to draw on?
- Is what you want to do a known ability that you have?
- Does what you want to do fit your personality?
- Is what you want to do a heart's desire?
- Do you have prophetic confirmation?
- Have others confirmed that this would be a good thing for you?

**Let's examine what God has to say about what I have advised here today?**

Do you remember I said that you needed to read your bible?

*Psalm 119:105 New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>105</sup> *Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
a light on my path*

We need wisdom to make the determination about what our purpose might be.

*James 1:5 New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>5</sup> *If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

We also need to pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.

*John 16:13 New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>13</sup> *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

Remember I talked about a peaceful and contented feeling when we are doing what God wants us to do?

**Isaiah 32:17** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>17</sup> *The fruit of that righteousness will be peace;  
its effect will be quietness and confidence forever.*

So why trust God with helping us find our purpose?

**Proverbs 3:5-6** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>5</sup> *Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;*  
<sup>6</sup> *in all your ways submit to him,  
and he will make your paths straight*

I also said that confirmation of our gifts is a good thing.

**Proverbs 15:22** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>22</sup> *Plans fail for lack of counsel,  
but with many advisers they succeed.*

**Proverbs 12:15** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>15</sup> *The way of fools seems right to them,  
but the wise listen to advice*

I said that God has given us gifts. I have also previously said that God resources what he sets his will towards. Consider that where you are gifted is usually a good indication of where you may be called...

Let's look at the gifts...

**Romans 12:6-8** *New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>6</sup> *We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your<sup>[a]</sup> faith; <sup>7</sup> if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,<sup>[b]</sup> do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

**Footnotes:**

- a. [Romans 12:6](#) Or the
- b. [Romans 12:8](#) Or to provide for others

**1 Corinthians 12:1-11** *New International Version (NIV)*

**Concerning Spiritual Gifts**

*12 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.*

*<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*

*<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

***Ephesians 4:11-13*** *New International Version (NIV)*

*<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

I would like to share with you something that when I came across excited me as I was looking to find something to prove God’s involvement with our purpose.

Turn with me to Psalms 138 verse 8:

***Psalms 138:8*** *New King James Version (NKJV)*

*<sup>8</sup> The LORD will perfect that which concerns me;  
Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever;  
Do not forsake the works of Your hands*

**Do you know that God has a plan for your life?**

***Jeremiah 29:11*** *New International Version (NIV)*

*<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

Did you know that Humility is a quality that Jesus portrait and that we need to exhibit to be effective when we exercise our gifts to help others...

I am quite old so many of you may not remember the Underdog. But I am going to use him for illustration here:

The underdog used to speak in rhyming couplets. His catch phrase was: “Here I come to save the day, the underdog is on his way!” The underdog was a cartoon superhero that saved the world from doom and destruction at the evil hands of his arch enemy Simon Bar-Sinister. When our superhero was in his alter ego he shined shoes. He was always a humble and loveable dog. People would give him a nickel for the shine job and he would bite it. He was loveable and adorable but he wouldn’t accept any wooden nickels. He did a simple job to serve others

because the job was its own reward. But he was a superhero in disguise. In his superhero form, he exhibited the same traits of humility and servitude. He would never accept credit or glory. Why?

Because the Job of helping others was what meant something to him, not the approval of the crowd or the praises of those he helped.

So... what can we learn about living a purposeful life from this old cartoon?

Part of being a disciple for Christ means that you won't always receive recognition and praise for the things you do even if you deserve it. Christ said that whatsoever you do for the least of these you have done unto me. God sees everything we do, and if we don't get credit that's okay... if we are doing it for the right reasons.

When you look for what your purpose is, keep in mind that God can't be glorified if you are seeking to glorify yourself.

### **God's Plans are better than ours**

I was an analyst and project manager. My whole job was to plan and execute what I and others did to achieve a desired result. I have learned obedience to God. His plans are always better than mine. As I sought to discover how to live a purposeful life, I struggled with the release of that control, but no more. I have learned and so can you. Here is what Gideon did. Turn with me to Judges 7:1-23.

*Judges 7:1-23 New King James Version (NKJV)*

### ***Gideon's Valiant Three Hundred***

*7 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.*

*<sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' <sup>3</sup> Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.*

*<sup>4</sup> But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." <sup>5</sup> So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." <sup>6</sup> And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. <sup>7</sup> Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place." <sup>8</sup> So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.*

*<sup>9</sup> It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. <sup>10</sup> But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, <sup>11</sup> and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. <sup>12</sup> Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.*

<sup>13</sup> And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed."

<sup>14</sup> Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

<sup>15</sup> And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." <sup>16</sup> Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. <sup>17</sup> And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: <sup>18</sup> When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!'"

<sup>19</sup> So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. <sup>20</sup> Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" <sup>21</sup> And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. <sup>22</sup> When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

<sup>23</sup> And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

How many of us would have wanted to take with us everyone we could find? Can we agree that God's plans are better? So what is stopping us from seeking his will and finding out what we were created to do; from the guy who did the creating. We can waffle waffle around but in the end, if we do what we are instructed to do in his word, we will lead a life that is pleasing and acceptable before God while being fulfilling to us individually.

Turn with me to James 4:13-17

**James 4:13-17** Common English Bible (CEB)

### **Warning the proud and wealthy**

<sup>13</sup> Pay attention, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such-and-such a town. We will stay there a year, buying and selling, and making a profit." <sup>14</sup> You don't really know about tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for only a short while before it vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Here's what you ought to say: "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." <sup>16</sup> But now you boast and brag, and all such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> It is a sin when someone knows the right thing to do and doesn't do it.

Are you willing to die to yourself to find out what God has in store for you?

\_Prayer\_