

Discovering your purpose in life

Proposition: You were made to be like him and to do what he did/ does. Submit to Him and he will direct your paths.

I want to begin this morning by asking you an incredibly important question. **Do you have a clear objective for your life?** Or are you drifting through life, being carried here and there by the winds of habit and fashion, tossed by waves of circumstances over which you have no control?

There is nothing more tragic in a human life than to live life not knowing what you are aiming for. And the old adage is true, if you aim at nothing, you will surely hit nothing.

I believe that as scripture says every person has something of eternity deposited into their hearts. That is everyone intuitively knows that you and I have been born on this planet for some purpose. We want our lives to count for something.

Now there are plenty of things that we can live for. Some live just to be happy. Others live to achieve far greater things, but what do our goals all mean, what do they all add up to? It would be tragic to reach the top of a ladder only to find that the ladder was leaning on the wrong wall.

One thing is certain. God is good and he created you and me for a purpose, when we find that purpose or purposes we will also find the greatest satisfaction and joy that we can experience in life.

This week I want to lay a really simple foundation on discovering your purpose in life. I want to show you how to position your life so that God will give you revelation that will guide and direct you.

Next week we will look at the whole realm of being guided into our purpose and destiny through revelation.

I want to begin by making a couple of assumptions.

Firstly if you are a seeker here. The most quoted verse in the bible John 3:16 makes it clear that it is God's will for every one to be saved.

John 3:16 God loved the people of this world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who has faith in Him shall have eternal life and never really die.

In the book of Acts the first group of Christians were about to put their faith in Him. They turned to the apostle Peter who had just explained who Jesus is and what He had done and said now we believe what do we do next, on other words, how do we start living the life of faith.

Acts 2:38 Peter said, "Turn back to God! Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and your children. It is for everyone our Lord God will choose, no matter where they live.

So faith begins by believing, turning from sin, being water and holy spirit baptized.

Jesus said the same thing in the great commission of

Mark 16:16-18

Anyone who believes in me and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe me will be condemned. Everyone who believes me will be able to do wonderful things. By using my name they will force out demons and they will speak new languages. They will handle snakes and will drink poison and not be hurt. They will also heal sick people by placing their hands on them.

When is it Gods will for some one to be saved? Today.

When is it his will for them to stop sinning? Today.

When is it His will for them to be baptized in Water and the Holy Spirit? Today.

I am going to assume that virtually everyone here has got those basics down.

After salvation we learn that there are 5 general purposes for all of us to fulfil in this life. Most of the church have read the 40 day devotion book by Pastor Rick Warren where he explains the 5 general purposes for all Christians. These things are at the core of Gods will for your life.

GOD'S WILL FOR EVERYONE

1. **WORSHIP**. That is to love God back privately and corporately.

1Tim 6:21; Rom 6:13

2. **FELLOWSHIP**. That is to learn to love and hang out with God's other children. 1 John 3:14; Rom 15:7; John 13:34-35

3. **DISCIPLESHIP**. That is to allow God to mould and shape you daily to become more like Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:18; Phil 1:11; John 15:8

4. **MINISTRY**. That is to serve God in a way that He has gifted And equipped you to serve Him.

1 Pet 4:10-11

5. **WITNESSING**. That is to verbalize your faith about Jesus to pre-Christians according to His prompting and leading.

2 Cor 4:15

As people come into the membership of the church most fill in a spiritual gift and passion survey so that the church can support them in **THEIR** calling.

We know that our passions (dreams/ desires) determine where we serve God and our giftings determine how we serve God.

Those things are Christianity 101 and I assume that most of you have those all worked out. If not please catch up with a member of the prayer

team or a host and we will direct you to some study material or just make time to talk to you. Today, I want to prepare us for revelation about our purpose by laying a Biblical foundation beginning at

Hebrews 12:1 & 2

Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us! So we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin that just won't let go. And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us (older translations say "laid out before us"). We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete.

THREE VITAL TRUTHS FROM THIS TEXT

(I) The Christian life is a race which has been marked out for us in advance.

We were made for a purpose or many purposes. God has already set out before us the big things that He wants us to achieve in life. We don't need to worry about the course but just run the race. However this is not a 100 metre sprint, this race that we have entered is much more like a long-distance marathon.

In order to run the race, to achieve the big things that God has purposed for us to achieve we must get rid of not only the sinful things but the time wasters, the things that stop us achieving His goals for our lives. To run this race is going to take real character. Determination, perseverance and endurance.

(ii) We are to fix our eyes on Jesus.

He is our pattern for how to live. What would Jesus do?

He is our inspiration for how to live. If we take our eyes off Jesus for any length of time we will lose the ability to run the race successfully.

(iii) Jesus makes our faith complete. He is the one who set it all in motion. Not only did he draw us to Him and to faith, he is also the perfecter of our faith. Jesus not only started the faith process in us, He is also going to complete it. God never starts anything that he doesn't intend to finish. You may be thinking that you once had a vision, a dream a God given desire to do something for God but you have gone off track for the last 10 or 20 years. Know this, He who started a good thing in you, he who birthed that dream or that vision in you, hasn't given up, He has a will and the power to see it fulfilled through your life, even now.

If you live a purposefilled life, determined to run the race to full distance, focused on Jesus as your example and as your inspiration, God will guide you one day at a time until you can get to the end of

your days and know that you fulfilled His purposes for your life in this generation.

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF A GOD DIRECTED LIFE?

a) Energy and satisfaction.

In John chapter 4 we read of the Lord taking a break by Jacobs well in Samaritan territory as the boys go off to buy some take-a-ways and to bring them back to Him. While he is there he speaks to a Samaritan woman and His divine insight into her life causes her and many others to turn to with faith. When the boys get back with the feed they ask him to dig in and this is what Jesus said.

John 4:31-34 While this was happening, Jesus' disciples were saying to him, "Teacher, please eat something."

But Jesus told them, "I have food that you don't know anything about." His disciples started asking each other, "Has some one brought him something to eat?"

Jesus said "My food is to do what God wants! He is the one who sent me, and I must finish the work that He gave me to do.

Jesus and the boys were hungry. And ladies you know that a hungry man is a difficult man often but now He is not hungry at all. What has happened. Because he was doing what the father wanted him to do, that is to witness and to bring words of knowledge to the unbelievers in Samaria, because he was fulfilling God's purpose through His life he now feels energized and full. You know the feeling don't you. You obey God and do something he prompted you to do and afterwards you just feel pumped. Like you are full of vitamin B's.

That's a result of a God directed life.

In addition to energy and satisfaction you have

b) A Kingdom way of looking at the world. A new perspective.

35-36 You may say that there are still four months until harvest time. But I tell you to look, and you will see that the fields are ripe and ready to harvest.

The disciples would have looked at the time of the year and thought hey, another four months until people will start harvesting crops here. Jesus on the other hand looked at things from a kingdom perspective and he could see what the Holy Spirit was doing in the hearts of the Samaritans, he could see that this was a season for the harvesting of souls of Samaritans. Just over the page in John's gospel we see a third result of living a purpose filled, God directed life. He says in

John 5:30 I cannot do anything on my own. The Father sent me, and he is the One who told me how to judge. I judge with fairness, because I obey Him, and I don't just try to please myself.

A third result of a purpose filled life is

c) **You will view people clearly.** Sometimes as we interact with folk we are scratching their backs so that they will in turn scratch ours. We are trying to get them to do something for us. We are wondering if this conversation, that action etc will benefit us in some way. We might be trying to control or use or manipulate some one into a certain response, or to make us look good in some way but... if we are living to please God, then those vision clouding motivations can go out the window and we can see people clearly and fairly.

Jesus was never fooled by anyone. Nobody ever deceived Him. Jesus discerned the truth in everyone who came to Him. He saw into their inner motives and knew what they were really after: Jesus knew how to reach and touch them where they needed to be touched, whether it was spiritual or physical because of His commitment to do God's will.

You and I can see people clearly if we like Jesus seek not to do our will but His will.

d) **You will become a channel of life to a dying and lost world.**

After Jesus had fed the 5000 He begins to speak to those gathered about the way His words and His actions bring life and happiness to others.

John 6: 35 I am the bread that gives life! No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry. No one who has faith in me will ever be thirsty.

What he is saying is that the hunger and thirst for meaning and satisfaction that drives the human soul is satisfied when you connect with Him because He chose not to do His own thing but what the Father wanted Him to do.

Now you and I might look at the Lord and say wow. His words, His actions brought fulfilment, contentment, wholeness in people as He obeyed the Father. How awesome it would be to be like break for those that are spiritually hungry or water to those that are seeking truth.

The fact is, that if we live this purpose filled life in obedience to Him we too can be a channel of life to a lost and dying world.

Finally, a result of a God led, purpose filled life is

e) **All the glory (praise/ honour) goes to Him.**

Just before Jesus was to die in our place he prayed a great high priestly prayer for His disciples. This is what he said in one part of that prayer.

John 17:4 I have brought glory to You here on earth by doing everything You gave me to do.

Jesus did, completed, everything that the Father wanted Him to do. What was the result of that kind of obedience? A staggering number of people turning their thankful hearts towards God in heaven.

Self-seeking, half hearted service never glorifies God because self will be all wrapped up in the serving. If we are concerned for who gets the credit,

or who gets the thanks, we might still be able to impress a whole lot of people but ... our service ultimately will not bring glory to God.

In order to glorify God we need to be focused on fulfilling our purposes for His honour, so that people will think of and give thanks to Him.

Wouldn't it be amazing to be able to say to our creator at the end of our lives, Lord I brought you glory by trying to do all the things that you asked me to do.

That's a purpose filled life. That's a life worth living. That's the kind of life he has prepared in advance for us to live.

Can I just say two things in closing in preparation for next week as we look at God revealing His will to you through the revelatory gifts. Today has just been about positioning ourselves, focusing our lives so that He will guide us daily. We have just covered basics but if you want to hear from God, dreams, visions, to have his heart implanted in your heart to do His will, in the life of Jesus and in the NT I see two attitudes that prepare us to receive divine revelation for guidance.

TWO ATTITUDES THAT PREPARE US TO RECEIVE DIVINE REVELATION FOR GUIDANCE

Following Jesus' example:

1. Choose to do God's will and not your own.

You and I would like it if God gave us at least a 5 year detailed strategic plan as you have in business and then we could maybe negotiate with Him. Lord I like this idea or that thing but hey, lets talk about what you have planned for me this Christmas. We would like to know in advance the fine print and then negotiate and then choose which parts to obey.

God on the other hand is looking for a people who will just say as Jesus did, not my will but your will be done. He is looking for a people who are determined to obey Him before He begins to unfold the detail.

Its been my observation of the Christian life that the believers that choose to do whatever he wants them to do; get the most revelation, dreams, visions, passions where God directs their lives.

Significant revelation follows a dying to self and a determination to obey Him no matter what He asks us to do.

The second attitude is very much like the first.

2. Offer your body to Him as a living sacrifice.

Romans 12:1& 2 Dear friends, God is good. So I beg you to offer your bodies to Him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God. Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to Him.

Jesus offered His physical body as a living sacrifice for our sins.

Paul encourages us to have this attitude to offer all that we are and have to Him as a daily spiritual sacrifice. You and I don't decide where go or what we are to do on our own. We ask Him first. Lord, this body, this life, this day is yours. Use me as you want, let me serve you in some way. Now the person with those kinds of attitudes will never ever get bored. He will always be revealing, stirring, directing, drawing, stretching you. If you get your foundations right and you decide to, commit to, live for Him – then greater revelation and direction will flow your way. And we will talk about that next week.