

Purpose 101

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Summary

So many of us are asking the universal question, “What is my purpose?”

PURPOSE IN THE WORLD

In the world, purpose is about what I do

We ask each other, “What do you do?” “What do you want to do when you grow up?” “What do you want to do when you leave school?”

PURPOSE IN THE WORD

In the Word, purpose is about who I am

- When we look at purpose through the lense of Scripture and the eyes of Jesus, we see that it has less to do with what we do (doing) and more to do with who we are (being).
- We were not created as human doings, we are human beings.
- God created us to be in relationship with Him. And not just any kind of relationship. The Bible tells us that He wants to have arguably the closest kind of relationship that one can have: the unbreakable bond of a parent and their child.

Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure.

Ephesians 1:4-5 NLT

We have a communal purpose – we are part of a collective

- As part of the Church, the body of Christ all over the world, we have been instructed by Jesus in what is known as the Great Commission:

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20 NRSV

- As Christians, our purpose is to love God and to love people. (Carrying out the Great Commission is one expression of this love.) Here’s how Jesus responded when asked by a religious leader what the greatest commandment in the Law was:

Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22:37-40 NIV

- Ephesians tells us more about God’s intended purpose for humanity to be raised from spiritual death to salvation and life in Christ, full of good works:

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ —by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what He has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Ephesians 2:1-10 NRSV

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As individuals, we were each created with a purpose

- This refers to a more specific assignment that we may sense God has for us. Some people refer to this as a “calling”.
 - » To discern how we as individuals can use our lives to give honour and glory to God, we can ask ourselves, “What are the gifts I’ve been given? What makes me feel alive? What do I enjoy doing?”
- Throughout the Bible we see that God uses individuals in specific ways to fulfill His purposes.
 - » Solomon was chosen to build God a temple in 1 Chronicles 28.
 - » Joseph preserves the family of Israel (Jacob) during the famine in Genesis 45:4-11.
 - » Esther saves her people, the Jews, in Esther 8.
- Don’t forget! Our primary purpose is not about doing things for God, but being with Him. We can be intentional about getting to know Him more and expressing love for God and others in whatever we are doing.
 - » The tasks through which we do this may change throughout our lives, and many of us will find that there is more than one right way to pursue these purposes.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.
Colossians 3:23-24 NIV

Bottom line...*Don't stress!* **Focus on being with God.** If you know what to do, do it. If you don't, do the next right thing in front of you, knowing that as you walk with God, His purposes will unfold in your life.

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him.
Romans 12:1 MSG

Definition

purpose: the reason for which something exists

Let's Discuss...

- Do you agree that most humans are searching for their purpose in life? Where do you think this drive to search comes from?
- How does the idea that our primary God-given purpose is to simply be with Him (rather than do things for Him) line up with previous notions of purpose that you have learned or gathered? Do you find it easy to believe that it can be this simple?
- Reflect on Matthew 22:37-40, where Jesus tells us that the greatest commandment is to love God, and the second is to love others as we love ourselves.
 - » In what way are these two commandments related to each other? Is it possible to love God but not ourselves or others, or vice versa?
 - » Can we love and accept others the way God wants us to if we don't first deeply love ourselves, flaws and all?
 - » Take a moment to consider how you love and treat yourself. If you were to love a friend in the same way, how would it affect them? Would it build them up? Would it draw them to Christ?
- Maureen talks about how as humans, we share a collective/communal purpose and have also been created with purpose as individuals. Do you agree with this thought? Why or why not? How do you see this in Scripture?

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Let's Pray...

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:37-40 NIV

- As we delve into this study on Purpose, let's pray that the Holy Spirit will give us clarity on this theme in such a way that enables us to better love Him, ourselves and others.

Let's Go Deeper...

- **The Purpose Driven Life** by Rick Warren [book]
- **The Alchemist** by Paulo Coelho [fiction book]
- **Hinds' Feet on High Places** by Hannah Hurnard [fiction book]