



Have a Purpose

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. —Paul, Phil. 3:8

Do you have an eternal purpose or a temporal purpose in this life? Maybe you feel that up to this point, you lead a purposeless life. The fact is that everyone has a purpose, even if it is merely just to survive until tomorrow. Some people dream about their purpose and even tell others about it, and other people go even farther and put their purpose into practice daily. They plan, they strategize, they identify the obstacles and specific, small and large objectives regarding it, they seek counsel about it, and they work hard with this purpose in the forefront of their minds. But face it, we all, whether we realize it or not, have something that is our purpose in this life. Our purpose is something that motivates us to get out of bed each morning. It's something we live for. It's something we might even be willing to die for.

Sometimes accidents, trials and hardships make us think more about our purpose. They ought to! The Apostle Paul experienced some hardships and blessings. He also had a primary purpose in life—it was to know the Lord. Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi saying, ***"What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"*** (Phil. 3:7–8). Paul clearly understood that people could establish a personal relationship with ...and become more intimately acquainted with the living Christ regardless of what they were going through. Yes, that possibility is still exhilarating to think about!

Now, may I ask you some questions? Are you satisfied with a religion of some sort—with a religious purpose of mere works? Most church-going Americans claim to be Christians. Individually, ***"examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves"*** (2 Cor. 13:5). Do you have a false assurance of salvation or are you born anew? Are you satisfied with having no religion at all? What exactly are you satisfied with? Is it working for you?

Do you know that the God of the whole universe can be known like a Friend?—I mean beyond having mere historical information about Him? Do you know what His specific, fulfilling purpose for you is?

Paul knew and he had more than mere facts. He had Christ—yup, Jesus Himself living on the inside of him, directing, guiding, comforting, providing, listening and answering his

every prayer ...with a yes, a no, or a wait. How exciting just to think about this. The God who created you and those in your family, loves you as much as He loves Paul and He can be known as your Lord. Are you a real Christian, but still the lord of your own life, because you don't fully trust Him ...and you want to do it your way so you don't miss out on any fun? That leads to misery! Jesus knows better what you need. Christ's joyous purpose and calling for you can be known! He can meet all your needs. Allow Him to be the Lord of your every decision. He alone can connect you with the heavenly Father and His plan in a personal, profound and real way! HOW COOL IS THAT? WAY COOL!

Paul had a WONDERFUL PURPOSE in life! He valued the knowledge of Jesus so much so, that he was willing to lose any or everything in order just to maintain this precious relationship. I hope this same eternal purpose is your primary purpose.

I like what Vernon Grounds said, "*Christians have an eternal purpose and a noble task—God has called us to bear witness of the Savior. We may not suffer as Paul did, but we can find in our faith a meaning that helps us walk steadfastly through life's toughest experiences.*"

***I shall not fear the battle if Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway if Thou wilt be my guide. —Bode***

Ever heard of Rick Warren? He is both loved and hated in America. Many pastors are jealous of him, but his book, *The Purpose-Driven Life* has had an incredibly long run on the best-seller lists. It's radically phenomenal appeal reminds us that sinners and saints alike really crave and long for a clear sense of purpose. My dog Roxy doesn't get up in the morning and ask: Now what am I here for? Why did God make me? Where will I go after I die? No, she just barks as she goes running after two things: her dog food bowl and then the toilet bowl for water.

It is people that want to know that their lives are involved in something worthwhile. We are not little Gods, but we were made in God's image. God has set eternity in our hearts! Without a strong sense of calling and purpose, life is nothing more than routine busyness. And being a follower of Jesus gives us a distinct advantage when it comes to having a sense of purpose. The Westminster Catechism sums it up so great when it says the "*chief end of man*" is to "*glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.*"

Glorifying God means knowing Him 24/7/365 and putting His character, His will, and His ways into practical action in all that we do. Many so called Christians are just weird, and give the Gospel a bad name, but we are all still accountable to God. The apostle Paul reminded us that true Christians "***are being transformed into [Christ's] image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord***" (2 Cor. 3:18). Jesus wasn't and isn't weird or spooky. Sinners just loved to hang out with Him. Do they love to hang out with you? Yes, the purpose of our lives is to let others see what God is really like as they watch and experience His uncompromising love through us.

What a profound privilege! What an honor it is to mirror God's love, mercy, grace, justice, and righteousness to a hurting world that's lost it's way—to people whose hearts are "veiled" to God's truth! (4:3-4). Yes, our purpose is to show others less of us as the days roll by ...and much more of Him. That's living on purpose with an eternal purpose!

*So let our lips and lives express the holy Gospel we profess,
So let our words and virtues shine to prove the doctrine all divine. —Watts*

Knowing God through Christ Jesus gives meaning to life; obeying God gives purpose to life. We must never forget that our purpose is to boldly exalt Jesus and to tactfully promote God's worldwide plan. Doing my best, I commit the rest. Unbelievers have good reason to fear the future, but it's going to be ok for the Christian with purpose. The Bible says, ***“We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His PUROPSE”*** (Rom.8:28, emphasis mine).

Make His purpose, your purpose ...until all have heard.

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