

What's Holding You Back?

“Purpose”

Part 3

Intro: Why do you exist? Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life? What does God want me to do? What does God expect from me? What really is my place in this world? Everyone eventually asks these questions. Not being able to answer them can be a weight that hinders us from becoming who God wants us to be. Answering them **incorrectly** can become a weight that holds us back in life. I believe until we can answer these type of questions with confidence, we can never fulfill what our theme verse is all about!

Heb. 12:1 “... let us strip off every weight that slows us down...and let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.” (NLT)

- Sometimes, the weight that is holding us back is a lack of purpose or chasing after the wrong purpose. Sometimes, we just don't know what race God wants us to run, while others are running fast, knocking themselves out... but they're in the wrong race...chasing after the wrong purposes. Both can be weights.
- 4 ways to answer the purpose question so that it is not a weight, but one of the greatest motivations to experience the life God is calling you to!

I. Believe That God Has A Life Purpose Designed For You

- You can't experience something you refuse to believe in!

Eph. 2:10 “For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (NLT)

Heb. 12:1 “...the race God has set before us.” (NLT) God has set a course before us to run!

- 2 key truths we must believe and embrace.

A. God created you for a predetermined purpose

1. Notice Eph. Says, “the good things HE PLANNED for us long ago.” Before the world began God knew you...knew you'd be born...knew who you would be...knew your gifts, abilities, passions and desire...and designed a purpose for you to follow. Wow!
2. You are not a mistake...an accident...not a random act of nature. You were created by the Living God to fulfill the purposes He has predetermined for you to follow.
3. God does not have purposes for His “favorites” and the rest of the people just have to figure life out on their own. Each one of you are a genuine, unique, masterpiece by God Himself, with an expressed purpose for you to discover and follow!
4. This world will tell you that you are nothing special / you don't matter / you can't make a difference / you don't measure up / and God wants you to know today that all this is a lie! God has a purpose for you to experience and live!
5. BUT...until you believe what God's word says, you will never experience this amazing promise!

- Say this with me: “I have a purpose from God to discover!”
- B. God’s purpose is according to your design and results in your greatest fulfillment
John 10:10 “The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.” (NLT)
1. The enemy wants to keep you from discovering your purpose. Jesus’ purpose is to help you and I discover the rich and satisfying life of following after God’s purposes.
 2. We must reject this thinking that following after God’s purposes will be unsatisfying / unfulfilling / boring / miserable / I’m going to miss out on fun / These are all lies from the enemy! (I used to think this when I was in High School) Reject this!
 3. God’s purposes for your life are the most fulfilling and satisfying thing you can ever do with your life because they are created around YOUR design. They are tailor made for you. God knows what He put in you, and therefore, designs your purpose with this in mind.
- We don’t know all that’s in us. We see limitations...God sees your potential.
 4. Jesus did not say to follow ME and be miserable / unfulfilled / unhappy / joyless. NO, He said follow me and I will give you a rich and satisfying life...the one you’ve been longing for.
 5. God’s purpose is shaped around your design by God and will result in the life you’ve always longed for. (I was made for this!!!) Until you believe this, God’s purposes will never become a reality. (Will you choose to believe this? A Choice!)

II. Evaluate What Purpose You Currently Live For

Prov. 14:15 “...The prudent carefully consider their steps.” (NLT) Let’s consider
Haggai 1:5-6 “Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.” (NIV) Think about why life isn’t working so well! Why it’s so unfulfilling? Think about the purposes you’re chasing after and honestly look at the results! Is this how you want to live your life?

A. Consider which kingdom you really live for

Matt. 6:33 “Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” (NLT)

1. The Bible tells us that there are only 2 Kingdoms. There is this earthly, fallen, worldly kingdom and there is God’s Kingdom. Each kingdom has its own priorities / values / purposes / and its own promises.
2. The natural default setting in the mind and heart of every person on the planet is to live for this earthly kingdom. We will all naturally live for careers / money / possessions / popularity / power and influence / pride / pleasure / ourselves / without much thought about what God wants. (Hard-wired into us.)

3. Even after people give their lives to Christ, the default setting doesn't automatically change. Most people continue living for this earthly kingdom. Their lives are still driven by their careers / their pursuit of wealth and possessions / the desire to provide for their families / plagued by stress. Some of you are wondering..."What's wrong with that?" This is normal.
4. What's wrong with it is it is NOT God's purpose for your life. In order to experience God's purpose for your life, you first must live for the right Kingdom. We will never experience God's designed purpose for our lives chasing after the wrong kingdom.
5. Go back to Matt 6:33. "Seek the Kingdom of God above ALL else..." Jesus is asking us to change our default setting. My purpose for your life is connected to MY Kingdom. It is impossible to discover if we chase after the wrong kingdom.
6. If you really desire God's purpose for your life you have to answer the Kingdom question. The critical questions is: What Kingdom do I really live for?

B. Commit to God's Kingdom agenda for your life

John 5:40 "Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life." (NLT) Jesus has a life for us to experience but we must go to Him and trust Him for it.

1. Changing which kingdom you pursue is a relational issue not an intellectual one. Do you trust Jesus enough to commit to what he wants for your life? What if I don't know what He wants? Doesn't matter! It's a trust issue.
- When my kids were little, it just amazed me how much they trusted me. (explain)
 2. Can you trust Him enough to commit to a new agenda you know nothing about? Can you trust Him to show you what His Kingdom is all about? Are you willing to go to Him to find the life you've been longing for? It's a relational issue!
 3. Can we go to Jesus and simply say; "I want to change Kingdoms / I want the life that you bring / I may not understand all that it means, but I commit to Your purpose and agenda for my life!"
 4. All life change starts with a commitment to a new direction. It is not about understanding all the details of the new journey but trusting in the One who is leading you there. Will you trust Him enough to commit to His agenda?
 - Maybe it's time to take a serious evaluation where you're really at...what you really live for...which kingdom you really seek, and commit to God's Kingdom agenda for your life?
 - Now that you've made that commitment, God doesn't leave us in the dark.

III. Follow What God Has Already Revealed

Ps. 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path." (NLT) God's purpose is not a big mystery. He's given us His word to follow.

Deut 30:19-20 "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would

choose life...You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life...” (NLT)

- The word of God gives us very clear navigational markers to help realign our lives in the direction God has for us. These are general purposes that each believer in Christ must follow that are God’s keys to life for everyone! These general purposes will unlock God’s specific purposes or your life.
- We first must have a commitment to what is revealed before God is going to give us specifics about what is not revealed. Too many believers are not committed to what is plainly stated and then get upset with God for not telling them what their purpose is.
- What are these general purposes that every believer must follow?

A. Seek to obey God’s relational priorities

Mark 12:29-31 “Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ...you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.” (NLT)

1. God has two very clear relational priorities that are His will for every follower of Christ. Love God and Love people. I can pretty much guarantee that if we neglect God’s greatest commands / greatest priorities, God will not reveal to us His specific purpose for our lives.
2. WHY? Because God’s Kingdom is a relational Kingdom. Every purpose that is designed for humanity by God will flow out of our relational connection with God and our loving relationships with each other.
3. This is why I have said over the years if we blow relationships, we waste our lives. WHY? Because this is a major part of our purpose. We were created and designed for relationships. God’s purpose for you will be relational!
4. If we want to embrace and walk in our purpose God created us for, we first must embrace His relational priorities. (Horizontal and Vertical)
5. Therefore, to not give yourself to the pursuit of experiencing God more and moving into closer relationships with each other, we will miss God’s agenda. God’s relational priorities are a prerequisite for discovering purpose.

B. Seek to obey God’s serving priorities

I Cor. 12:7 “ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. “ (NLT)

Eph. 4:16 “He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (NLT) Notice the serving and relational priorities?

1. Every believer in Christ is gifted to serve, called to serve, and empowered to serve. It is not an optional activity in the Kingdom of God. Serving is one of God’s general purposes for every believer.
2. In fact, a non serving Christian is a contradiction in terms. A non serving Christian is out of the will of God. A non serving believer is not running the race God has set

before them, because this race will always involve serving.

3. Here at Foothills we don't promote serving because it's a good idea. We champion service because it is God's will for your life! It is God's path for you to discover how He made you and what He has in store for you in the future.
4. To not serve is to miss God's purpose for your life. I hear so often that people are too busy to serve. If this is the case, then it's apparent we are chasing after the wrong things somewhere. (wrong kingdom / wrong priorities /
5. It is through serving that God begins to reveal what He put in you...reveals your spiritual gifts / ignites new passions / This is God's process of self discovery. Obeying God's serving priorities has gotten me to where I am at today.
6. Will you embrace God's serving priorities? There are so many places to get involved here at Foothills. It's not just for the ministry, but for you!(Describe)

IV. Trust God As He Directs Your Life

Ps. 143:10 "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. May your gracious Spirit lead me forward on a firm footing." (NLT)

Prov. 3:5-6 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." (NLT)

- God promises to lead us 100s of times. The problem is not in God's direction, it's in our hearing and following. God is not here to make His will some big mysterious puzzle that only a few get to discover. He promises to direct our lives if we let Him.

A. Learn to be led

1. Embrace the journey. Walking in God's purpose for your life is a journey not an event! (I found it!) God's purpose for your life is progressive, ever changing, constantly developing, connected to your maturity and growth. As soon as you think you've arrived, God just expands your purpose once again!
2. This is why if you don't make your relationship with God a priority you will miss His purpose for your life. Our purpose is this relational journey with God where we learn to be led.
3. I can't even imagine not being led. To think that I have to be smart enough to be the pastor of Foothills; knowing what decisions to make; knowing what direction to go; knowing what to speak on every week. That would be horrible! Way too much stress! What about you? Do you feel like you have to figure everything out?
4. God promises to lead us. Take Him up on the offer! Yes, it takes practice, but take comfort in the fact that God wants you to hear Him. Just take Prov. 3:5-6 as your theme verse for direction and see what happens! (Talk through verses)

B. Learn to be surprised

1. If there is one theme that has played out over my life it is this one. God will surprise you. I am surprised that I am even in the ministry...became a pastor...graduated from college...started a church...stayed in Molalla...that I get

to speak to all of you weekly...

2. Being surprised isn't being faithless, it is simply being amazed at God's plan for your life. As you allow Him to lead you forward you will find yourself doing things, saying things, in places where you never dreamed possible.
3. You will discover that embracing the purpose of God for your life is by far the greatest joy and the greatest adventure imaginable. That God's purpose for your life is beyond anything you could have ever dreamed up for yourselves and the greatest privilege of your life.

Purpose does not have to be a weight. It should be something that gives us motivation and anticipation to live each day. If purpose is something you've been struggling with, will you...

Believe God has a life purpose designed just for you

Evaluate what purpose you currently live for

Follow what God has already revealed

Trust God as He directs your life