

Purpose Driven Life, I

It's Not About Me

February 1, 2004

IT ALL STARTS WITH GOD

- Our reading assignment was the first three chapters.

Being successful, and fulfilling our life's purpose are not the same issue. I can reach my personal goals and enjoy raving success and still miss the purpose for which I was created.

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. – Colossians 1:16 NIV

- We were created *by* his purpose and *for* his purpose

The Message says, "Everything ... finds its purpose in him."

Early scientists started with the premise that the sun revolved around the earth. Nothing made sense until they realized that it was the sun that was at the center.

The search for the "meaning of life" has puzzled people for eons ... because (like those early scientists) we typically begin with the wrong starting point – ourselves.

- Focusing on myself will not reveal my purpose

If we are indeed created beings, it stands to reason that we must understand our Creator's purpose for making us. If we aren't created beings ... then there is no purpose to find.

For the life of every living thing is in his hand, and the breath of all humanity. – Job 12:10 NLT

- We exist because God wills that we exist

The key to life is letting God use us for His purposes ... not us using Him for our own purposes. Without God, life makes no sense. It's only in Him that we can discover our origin, identity, meaning, purpose, significance, and destiny.

YOU ARE NOT AN ACCIDENT

Q: How many of you are the result of an unplanned pregnancy?

Q: How many of you have heard that you were an “accident”?

- Your parents may not have planned you, but God did

He wasn't surprised; He wasn't caught off guard. Before you were ever conceived by your parents, you were conceived in the mind of your Heavenly Father.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. – Psalm 139:13-16 NIV

God had a plan for you before there was a “you”. It doesn't matter if your parents were good, bad, or indifferent.

- There're no illegitimate children only illegitimate parents

He has a reason for everything He creates. It isn't by accident that any one of us is breathing at this very moment.

Q: Do you know God's motive for creating you? Love.

God didn't need to create you. He wasn't lonely. But He wanted to make you in order to express His love.

Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure. – Ephesians 1:4-5 NLT

- He made us so He could love us

You were created as a special object of God's love. This is a truth to build your life on.

God is love. – 1 John 4:8 NIV

- It doesn't say He *has* love; He *is* love!
- Love is the essence of God's character.

There is a God who made you for a reason; you're not a mistake, a mishap, or an accident. We were made *on purpose* and therefore *have purpose*

WHAT DRIVES YOUR LIFE?

When we're not grounded in God's love, other forces end up driving our lives. Things like: lust, greed, jealousy, pressure, deadlines, painful memories, a chip on your shoulder, etc.

Chapter three asks the question: What drives your life? This could be a great small group topic (depending on how honest you're willing to be).

Rick offers Five Common Driving Forces:

1. Guilt - Many people spend their entire lives running from regrets and trying to hide their shame. They allow their past to control their future.
- Guilt-driven people are manipulated by memories

Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!
Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! - Psalm 32:1-2 NLT

We are products of our past, but we don't have to be prisoners of it. God specializes in clearing our conscience.

2. Anger - Many people hold onto hurts and never get over them, even though resentment always hurts them more than the person they resent.

Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple. - Job 4:2 NIV

- Anger-driven people either "clam up" (and internalize their rage) or "blow up" (and explode it onto others).

Q: Which do you tend to do? I'm usually a "clam up".

Q: How many "clam ups" do we have here? How many "blow ups"?

3. Fear - Many people are hindered by traumatic experiences, unrealistic expectations, or from growing up in an overly controlling home.
- Fear-driven people deprive themselves of great opportunities

Fear is a self-imposed prison that'll keep me from becoming the real "me"; focusing on God's love forces out this driving force.

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. - 1 John 4:18 NIV

4. Materialism - For many people, the desire to acquire becomes the central goal of their lives.

This is based on the misconception that having more will make me more happy, more important, and more secure.

Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! - Luke 12:23-24 NIV

- Material-driven people confuse self-worth with net worth

But deep down, every one of us knows that our value is not determined by our valuables. Real security can only be found in that which can never be taken from us.

5. Approval

Many people allow the expectations of parents (dead or alive), spouses, children, teachers, or friends to control their lives.

- Approval-driven people feel they must earn their love

They are controlled by the opinions of others, and their lives take on the quality of performing seals.

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. - Matthew 6:24 NIV

Q: Honestly, who is your master?

THE BENEFITS

The greatest tragedy is not death, but wasted life. We were made to have meaning; engineered for eternity. Paul warned:

Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise ... Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. - Ephesians 4:15; 17 NIV

- Without a purpose, life is motion without meaning

Without a clear purpose, we'll keep changing directions, jobs, relationships, churches, or other externals - hoping each change will settle the confusion and fill the emptiness.

- Throughout this series, we will examine our purpose together.