

Daily Devotional Guide

Monday – Some translations of Proverbs 29:18 say, “Without a vision, the people will perish.” It is true. A life without purpose is not a life worth living. Many people drift through life without purpose or direction and often wonder why their lives are not meaningful. A purpose gives us the will to live. The good news is that we were made for a purpose. Begin to pray today that God will reveal to you the purpose of your life. It is a good idea to keep a daily journal with your prayers and what you feel God is showing you. Enjoy the journey!

Tuesday – This week I want us to review some key questions that we must answer correctly if we are to find our purpose. The first is a question of existence – “Why am I alive?” The prophet Jeremiah asked this question in this way, “Why was I born? Was it only to have trouble and sorrow, to end my life in disgrace?” (Jeremiah 20:18). The answer is we were made by God and made for God. Proverbs 16:4 says, “The Lord has made everything for His own purpose” (Proverbs 16:4a). This tells us two important things: God has made each of us for a purpose and knows what that purpose is and God desires to reveal that purpose to us and fulfill it. A good place begin is that all of us are on this earth to be loved by God and to love God.

Wednesday – Today, let us focus on another key question as we seek our purpose. This is a question of significance – “Does my life matter?” Someone has stated that there are three levels of living – survival, success, and significance. The level of significance is where joy is found. The level of significance comes when we know we matter to God and we are living God’s purpose for our lives. This level also includes making a difference to others. Before you go to bed tonight read Isaiah 44:2 and then read Psalm 139.

Thursday – The last key question is one of relevance – “What is my purpose?” Again, the Bible gives us a very good clue. Proverbs 9:10 says, “Knowing God results in every other kind of understanding.” This insightful verse tells us that if we want to know what our purpose in life is we must get to know God better. Read Colossians 1:16 and Ephesians 1:11. The closer we get to God, the closer we get to our purpose and to the needs of others.

Friday – Today, reflect on the ideas and the scripture readings from this week. Commit to spending the next month in prayer to God about your purpose. Take a few minutes each day and ask God to give you the purpose to your life. Always pray this prayer with faith, believing that God will reveal it to you. Write in your journal all the thoughts that come to you. Also write down your daily experiences. Remember, God wants to reveal to you your purpose just as much as you want to receive it.



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~ Living the Dream ~ Unlocking Your Potential

Sunday, January 16, 2011

Sermon by: Dr. Charley Reeb, Senior Pastor

Scripture Lesson: Proverbs 29:18

A couple of years ago USA Today did a survey on religion and published their findings in an article. They asked a section of people this question: “If you could get direct access to God, what one question would you ask God?” More than half of those surveyed responded that they would ask God, “Why am I here on earth?”

This a fundamental question that gets to a fundamental human need. Deep down we all desire to know the purpose of our lives. As a pastor, the most common question I receive is “How can I know God’s purpose for me?” A few years back Rick Warren created a national phenomenon by writing the book “Purpose Driven Life.” This book created a great surge of people wanting to live a life with purpose. The need for a purpose affects all of us, regardless of age or station in life. I recently visited our Singles and Friends Sunday school class, and they were discussing their goals for the new year. There is a sweet lady in that class who just turned 80. You know what she asked God on her 80th birthday? “What next Lord?” We all want to know what on earth we are here for.

Perhaps this is the most important question of our existence because a purpose gives us a will to live. The first funeral I did was for a man who took his own life. When I

visited with the family, they wanted me to read the note he left. There was a sentence in that note that I will never forget. It read, “I don’t feel I have a purpose to my life.” Proverbs 29:18 is right. Without a vision, a purpose, people will indeed perish. Living life with purpose is critical to living the dream and experiencing the abundant life Christ calls us to live. All successful people in life have one thing in common. They have figured out their definite purpose in life. They visualize it every day and keep it before them. And they live life out of that purpose.

The great irony is although most of us know that a purpose is essential to finding fulfillment the majority of people go through life aimlessly, wasting precious energy and time going nowhere. Why? Most people will not take the precious little time it takes to discern God’s purpose for them. Many are like Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* when she questioned the Cheshire cat. “Tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here,” Alice said to the cat. “That depends on where you want to get to,” the cat responded. Alice replied, “I don’t care where.” The cat said, “Well, then it doesn’t matter which way you go.” Many of us are like Alice. We know our lives need purpose, but we will not take the time to figure out where we need to go.

This morning is your time! You may be a young person with your whole life ahead of you and you want to know what you are supposed to do with your life. Perhaps you are middle aged and in between seasons in your life and you want to know what to do next. Maybe you are retired and bored and you desire to know what God has in store for you. Invest the next few minutes with me and you will be well on your way to discovering your purpose!

You Are Here For a Purpose

God wants you to live your life on purpose. I remember a prominent lawyer coming to see me in another church I served. He was a partner in a lucrative firm. He had everything – fancy cars, several houses, prestige and power. He walked into my office with an expensive suit on and a Rolex watch around his wrist. After some small talk I asked, “So, what brings you here today?” He responded, “Well, quite honestly, I am miserable. Please tell me there is more to life than this. Please tell me there is more to life than the accumulation of things.” This man was successful, but miserable.

I love bookstores. And I love to peruse the self-help section. There is a lot of good advice in many of the self-help books. You do what they tell you to do and you will be successful. However, I have learned that being successful and knowing your purpose is not the same thing. You can be successful and still not be fulfilled. None of us will find fulfillment until we find out why we are here on earth.

You were made by God and made for God; You were put here for a purpose. Until you understand that life will never make sense – life will never flow. Until you understand this truth you will continue to swim upstream in your life. Let me give you a powerful verse of scripture that will change your life.

Proverbs 16:4 says, “The Lord has made everything for His own purpose.” This verse tell us two important things: God made you for a purpose and knows what it is and God wants

to reveal it to you and fulfill it (James Merritt, “Why Me?”).

A good place for us to start today is all of us were made to be loved by God and love God in return, and we were made to love others.

Your Life Matters

Hear that today. Your life matters.

During World War II, there was a Nazi concentration camp in Hungary. The prisoners in that camp worked in a factory processing sewage. Eventually, the factory was bombed and the prisoners had nothing to do. The Nazi soldiers had the prisoners take the rubble from the bombed factory and moved it to a field. The next day the prisoners told them to move it back. This went on for days, back and forth, back and forth. They had no purpose. It was just the same thing over and over again. Something strange began to happen. Over time, the prisoners loss their will to live. In fact, many of them tried to throw themselves in front of guards wanting to be shot. Without purpose, the will to live dies. We were made for meaning and purpose.

People live life at one of three levels. There is the survival level – day to day, paycheck to paycheck, just existing. This is where most people are in life. Then there is the success level – living comfortably, freedom, options, health. Compared to most of the world you are wealthy, but this level does not bring fulfillment. Finally, there is the level of significance, which is knowing your purpose and living it out. James Merritt reminds us that “people who live at this level know they matter to God, know they can make a difference to others, and they make that difference by living out their purpose.”

If you doubt you can live your life at this level of fulfillment and joy, let me give you two scripture passages to meditate on. They will transform your life.

Isaiah 44:2 says, “I am your Creator, You were in my care, even before you were

born.” Psalm 13:13-14 says, “You knit me together in my mother’s womb...I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Whenever you doubt your life matters, repeat these verses to yourself.

You Can Discover Your Purpose

The only way you can know the purpose of something is by doing one of two things. You can talk to the one who invented it or built it or you can read the owner’s manual (Merritt). The great news is that we can do both! As children of God, we can talk to the one who invented us through prayer and we can read the owner’s manual, the Bible.

Let’s read the owner’s manual today and find your purpose. I’m about to give you a key verse of scripture that will unlock your potential and lead you to your purpose. Here it is: Proverbs 9:10, “Knowing God results in every other kind of understanding.” Are you desperate to find your purpose today? Here is how you do it - get to know God better. Ephesians 1:11 says it well, “It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for...part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.” Here is how it works: “If God created you for a purpose and wants you to know that purpose, then the only way to get to know that purpose is to get know God” (Merritt). The more you get to know God, the more you will understand your life.

Let me give you a formula that is guaranteed to give you your purpose in life. I have given this formula to others and it has worked wonders and it will work for you. Here are the 4 P’s to finding purpose: Prayer, Power of the Bible, Passion and People. Spend the next 30 days praying to God, getting to know him and your life, reading the owner’s manual, paying attention to those virtuous desires in you, and listening to what the significant people in your life are saying about you and your gifts. Add these four P’s up and you will have your purpose.

Some of you may ask, “Well, how will I know that it is really God’s purpose for me?”

It will pass two tests. It will pass the time test. After a few months it will still feel right. And it will pass the people test. It will meet the needs of people. A God given purpose always connects your passion with the needs of others.

In 1983, John Sculley quit his post at Pepsi Corporation and became president of Apple Computer. This was a big risk. He left a well established company to go to an unproven little outfit. There were no guarantees. There was only one’s man’s vision. When Scully was asked why he made the move, he said it was because of a question Apple cofounder Steve Jobs asked him. Jobs looked at Scully and asked, “Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world?”

Let me ask you: “Do you want to live your life as usual or do you want to live a life of purpose changing the world with the love of Christ?” Give your life to Christ today and begin living out your purpose. It’s time to live your life on purpose. Amen.