

Our Purpose

When the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes decided to determine his purpose in life, he started by accumulating a vast sum of money only to discover that it didn't provide the meaning he had hoped for. Then he sought power, attained it, and discovered that it too failed to satisfy. Next came a scandalous pursuit of pleasure; then fame and celebrity. Finally, at the end of all his efforts, he uttered his famous words:

“Vanity, vanity, all is vanity.”

Or, as another translation says, “All of this is like chasing the wind.”

God's 24/7 Clock

We were not created to chase the wind. We are created to join God on a mission. Some people think of God as hanging around beyond the edges of the universe somewhere, listening to really good worship music. The Bible sees it much differently. It teaches that God is at work 24/7, all over our world, filling God's followers with grace and mercy and power to reclaim and redeem and fix this broken planet.

It isn't as if God has work gloves on and calls us to roll up our sleeves and join God with our talents, our money, our time, and our passion. God wants his mission to become ours. “If you're into chasing the wind, God tells us, “you can keep right on doing that. Or you can hook up with me, and together we'll transform this hurting planet.”

Team Up with God

What would it feel like to lay your head on your pillow at night and say,

“You know what I did today? I teamed up with God to change the world.”

The desire to be a world-changer is planted in the heart of every human being, and that desire comes directly from the heart of God. We can suffocate that desire in selfishness, silence it with the chatter of competing demands, or bypass “This is What I was Made For” on the fast track to personal achievement. But it's still there.

Whenever we wonder if the daily nine to five grind or our round-the-clock parenting tasks are all there is to life that divine desire nudges us.

Whenever we feel restless and unsatisfied, the desire whispers in our soul.

Whenever we wonder what a life of real purpose would feel like, the desired calls us to something more.

Jesus Made It Clear

Jesus made it pretty clear what God's idea of a transformed world would look like, first within the community of believers called the church, and then as the values of that community spread out into the world. When he said we should love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, he was calling us to trade a ritualized religion for a genuine love relationship with God and to offer the same kind of attention, honour, and compassion we give ourselves.

When Jesus punctuated his teaching with concern for the poor, the powerless, and the oppressed, he was describing a new value system. When he said, "Take up your cross and follow me", he was telling us in graphic terms that following him would require sacrifice, hardship, and death to something selfish inside of us.

Our call to love our neighbor as ourselves includes our neighbor across the globe as well as the one next door. The transformation God longs for transforms everything: marriages, families, friendships, economic and political systems. It lifts up the humble, humbles the proud, and draws people together across racial, social, and cultural divides.

Acts 13:36 speaks about the Old Testament character David. It says simply "And David served the purposes of God in his generation." I love the clarity of that single sentence.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

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