

Bible Study

“Empowered by Grace to Know Your Purpose”

Prayer: Dear good and gracious heavenly Father, we pray for your blessings on this study as we examine the purpose you have for each of our lives. Empower us, Lord, to be faithful to our calling. Teach us to fix our eyes on you so that we will not be deterred in our serving and witnessing. Mold us into the people that you want us to be. In your name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

King David wrote, “*The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me*” (Psalm 138:8). Just as God had a purpose for David, so he has for each of us as well. Have you given much thought to what purpose God may have for your life? By grace, we understand that we were created for God’s purpose, not ours. “*...for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13). Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to acknowledge that God is in control and that we are made for his pleasure. Through his power, we are transformed into people who stop focusing completely on ourselves and become his stewards. Our mind-set changes from what we want to do to what God wants us to do.



In order to understand God’s plan, we need to turn to his Word. As we read and study God’s Word, his purposes for our lives are revealed to us, and, through Word and Sacrament, we no longer conform to the pattern of the world but are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). God’s purposes become our purposes. We abandon our agendas and accept God’s agenda for our lives.

Unfortunately, many people live with no real purpose and many others live with no purpose other than to please themselves. Thomas Carlyle wrote, “The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder ... a waif, a nothing, a no man.” We need purpose in order to have meaning for our lives. If we don’t have meaning, life does not have value or hope. In Christ, we have purpose, meaning, and hope.

We thank God that he has given us faith and wisdom to understand that he is both our source of life and our purpose for living. We realize that we exist only because God wants us to exist. “*Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created*” (Revelation 4:11). Our purpose is to live for “*the praise of his glory*” (Ephesians 1:12-13). We are blessed to have been given the privilege of being stewards of a wonderful and gracious God who has created us and called us to serve him.



When we understand our role and purpose as God’s stewards, we begin to see that our time, abilities, and money are tools to accomplish God’s purposes for our lives. Acknowledging our blessings as gifts from God, we want to show our gratitude for these gifts by using them in ways that accomplish his purposes and extend his kingdom. Therefore, we are eager to help others, to

serve in church, to witness, and to give. As we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, we become more selective with the activities and the ways we spend our time, talents, and resources. As we grow in our understanding of Biblical stewardship, we become more intentional and focused on using our lives and resources in ways that help us live as faithful stewards.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is it important for you to understand God's purposes for you in order for you to be a faithful steward?
2. What two different mind-sets are presented in Romans 8:5-8? What do they cause to happen?
3. Can you be successful by the standards of the world and still fulfill the purposes for which God created you? How/how not?
4. What did Jesus say you will do if you love him (John 14:15)?
5. Knowing that our primary purpose is to glorify God, what are some things that you can do that will remind you throughout the day to glorify him?
6. You give praise and glory to God in public worship. How do you glorify him privately?
7. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. What is the ministry of reconciliation?
8. Read Luke 9:57-62. What were the excuses the people gave for not being disciples? What are other common excuses? What excuses do you make?
9. God wants all people to share the Gospel with others, so how does Jesus help you run the race of testifying to the Gospel (Hebrews 12:2-3)?
10. How is it different to be a servant than to act as a servant?
11. What purpose does God have for your money? What effect does greed have on your being a channel of his blessings to others?

***Prayer:** Dear heavenly Father, thank you for our physical and spiritual lives. Thank you for this life and the life to come with you. Help us to live lives of faith and help us to be about fulfilling the purposes that you have for each of us. Place in us a desire to use all things to your glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*