

I AM CREATED FOR A PURPOSE

Gen. 1:26-28; Eph. 2:10

INTRODUCTION:

A. Most people go through life having no idea why God put them here.

- Many of us fail to understand that God has intentionally placed us on planet earth & that He has a purpose for our lives.

- When we go back to the beginning of time we see that God created man & woman with a distinct purpose.

- READ Gen. 1:26-28.

- We were not only created in the image of God, we were created to serve God.

B. The secret to living a fulfilled & satisfied life is found when we discover the purpose for which God created us.

- READ Eph. 2:10

- When we begin to understand that we are God's workmanship specifically created to do good works we are at the starting block of living a fulfilling life.

Transition: We need to realize that there are:

1. THREE LEVELS LIVING

- All of us will live our lives on one of these three levels:

A. The lowest level people live on is the SURVIVAL level.

- They just barely eek out life.

- They don't really live, they just exist.

- They put in their time & hope for the weekend.

- They live in the survival mode.

- If I were to ask you, "What's your number one goal in life?" & you were to say, "Right now, my number one goal is to escape to Tahiti, lay on the beach, & soak up rays." -- You're in the survival mode.

- And you may need that right now but that's not really what you want to do with the rest of your life.

- The next level is a little bit higher level.

B. It's the SUCCESS level.

- That's where most people in America are today.

- By the world's standards you've made it -- You have a comfortable life style -- You have possessions, you have a position, you have pleasure -- Life is pretty good - You've got problems, yes, but millions of people around the world would love to have your problems -- You've hit the success level.

- But in our success driven culture, more & more people who are supposedly successful are asking the question, "If I'm really so successful, why don't I feel more fulfilled?"

- You look at the recent best selling books, many of them have to do with the dark side of success: Titles like, Ambitious Men: Their Drives, Their Dreams, & Their Delusions; The Price of Success: Is it Worth It?; Quiet Desperation: The Truth about Successful Men; Beyond Success, Coping With the Fast track Blues; The Search for Meaning.

- What are these books saying? — They're saying the same thing that ultimately success by itself does not satisfy.

- You must go beyond success to the third level of living.

C. The 3rd level is the level of SIGNIFICANCE

- What you & I really need is not success, but significance.

- To feel like "My life matters, I count. I'm not just taking up space & using up resources but there's a meaning, there is a driving purpose behind my life."

- And in God's eyes, I really count.

- People who've discovered significance are those who've discovered God's plan for their life.

- They get in on God's plan & purpose & know what God put them here on earth for.

- And the result is, they experience the highest level of living, the level of significance.

- You know what the tragedy is? — That even many successful people feel very insignificant, because they've never reached that level.

- You know, when you look at the people that have made the greatest impact on this world, they were not the brightest, they were not the wealthiest, they were not the best educated. But the people that have made the biggest difference in life, for good or bad, were those who had the deepest convictions right or wrong, the deepest convictions.

- And I want to suggest to you today that to be all that you were meant to be, you need to discover God's purpose for your life & develop it & then maintain it.

- Discover & develop your own personal life mission.

D. Let's consider 2 biblical men who discovered God's purpose for their lives.

1. The first one is David.

- Acts 13:36 says, "David served God's purposes in his own time, & then he died." - How would you like to have this written on your tombstone: *You served God's purpose in your generation* -- I don't know a better epitaph than that.

- You say, Why was David a man after God's own heart? -- Because he did with his life what God created him to do.

- He was exactly whom God made him to be -- he fulfilled the purpose of God for his life.

2. Another man in the New Testament is Paul.

- Paul was a man of tremendous purpose.

- He was driven by the purpose of God in his life.

- In Acts 20:24 he explains his purpose. "I reckon my own life to be worth nothing to me; I only want to complete my mission & finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do."

Transition: Now, let's move to the 2nd area we need to understand this morning:

- What are the benefits of living a life of SIGNIFICANCE — A life lived in God's purpose?

- There are many we could list, but I'd like us to consider 5 this morning.

2. FIVE BENEFITS OF LIVING A PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE

A. IT WILL REDUCE MY FRUSTRATION

- A purpose driven life reduces frustration because once you really decide your direction, it's so much easier to make decisions.

- You know why people tend to be less patient, more uptight, more prone to outbursts many times?

- Because we live in a world that overwhelms us w/all kinds of multiple choices.

- We live in a world of incredible options, & that makes decision making so much more difficult, & frustrating.

- You know, it's no longer a matter between this or that, it's a matter of 50 different choices.

- You can get 50 channels on cable TV & still find nothing worth watching.

- In a grocery store there are 150 different kinds of cereals to buy.

- Every week 200 new grocery items are introduced to the market.

- Every year over 200 new magazines are introduced to the market.

- And we get frustrated by the indecisiveness the world causes.

- Because when you don't know your purpose you can't make easy decisions.

- Now the decisions we are talking about are much more important than what cereal to buy, or what channel to watch on TV — but there are also many choices we must make that concern our spiritual lives.

- You remember what the great theologian Alice in Wonderland said? -- "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there!"

- God tells us in James 1:8 that "the double minded man is unstable in all he does" because he doesn't know what he's here for.

- The longer I am a Christian, the more I realize how important it is for me to focus my life.

- It makes so much sense, if you know where you're going to go, if you've discovered God's purpose for your life, & you know where you are & where you want to be, then you simply draw a straight line & head toward it.

- Now sure, you're going to have detours & bumps in the road, & road blocks.

- But once you decide your direction, you can get there a whole lot quicker when you know where you're going.

- It reduces the frustration level in your life, because every time you make a decision you say, "Will this decision help me fulfill God's purpose for my life?"

- If yes, I do it -- If it's not, I don't do it.

- Trying to live your life without knowing the purpose God made you for is kind of like driving in a fog.

- Living in God's purpose reduces our frustration & replaces it w/the peace of God

- Isaiah said (26:3), "You LORD, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in You."

- The first benefit of living a purpose driven life is that it reduces frustration.

B. IT WILL INCREASE MY MOTIVATION

- Once I know what I'm here for, I have a reason to live.
- And you will be amazed at the amount of energy that you have, once you discover, "What am I here for?"
- And all of a sudden you have a reason to get out of bed.
- You have a new step, a new bounce, because you're motivated to fulfill what God made you to be.
- You want to guess how many people never think beyond the next weekend?
- They just live one day at a time, day in, day out It's the daily grind, hoping to get to the weekend.
- The result is, so many people, even professing Christians, feel just like Job (7:16) "I give up; I am tired of living. Leave me alone. My life makes no sense."
- He says I don't have any purpose, any sense in my life, Things seem so hopeless. - You know what? -- When you have no purpose, you have no motivation.
- What's God's secret to energy & enthusiasm & hope in life?
- The secret is to live a purpose driven life.
- Listen to this, from Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you & not to harm you, plans to give you hope & a future."
- He says I want to give you a hope & a future.
- A future, a hope, develops enthusiasm — it motivates us to be who God wants us to be.
- Eph. 3:20 "[God] is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us."
- Now I'm a pretty big dreamer but God says, "Barry, you think of the biggest dream I could do for your life & I can top that. Let me blow your mind. I can do far beyond what you think is possible in your life if you will trust Me & live with humility & integrity & walk before Me in the way I want you to live."
- That is motivational.

C. IT WILL ALLOW MORE CONCENTRATION

- The fact is, you don't have time for everything in life.
- But the good news is this: God doesn't expect you to do everything in life.
- There are only a few things worth doing in the first place.
- And that's why selection is the name of the game for effectiveness.
- Concentrating your energy on what God wants you to do, not what everybody else in the world wants you to do.
- Because when you know your purpose in life & when you discover why God made you as an individual, your purpose in life not only defines what you do, but it also defines what you don't do.
- It defines what business you're in & defines what's none of your business.
- Listen to Phil. 3:13, "the one thing I do...is to forget what is behind me & do my best to reach what is ahead."
- Paul says knowing your life purpose, gives your life focus.
- There is incredible power when you focus your life.
- It's like light diffused has no power at all.
- But if I focus a magnifying glass & focus the power of the sun on a piece of paper I can set it afire.
- If I focus even more than that, it becomes a laser that can cut through steel.
- But light diffused has no power.
- In the same way, life focused has tremendous power -- Life diffused has none.
- Nothing is quite as powerful as a life lived on purpose.
- Listen to what God says to us in Eph. 5:15-16 "Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."
- Don't waste your life -- Know what's important, pay close attention, make good use of every opportunity -
- Do what the Lord wants you to do.
- A purpose driven life allows that kind of concentration.

D. IT WILL ATTRACT COOPERATION

- The amazing thing when you figure out where you're going to go in life other people want to go along w/you.
- So few people really know what to do with their lives, when they see someone who does, they say, "That's the right direction; I want to go along too."
- God has many resources to help you that you've not even considered.
- They're multiplied by thousands of persons w/all sorts of talents, concerns, skills, & contacts that God can bring into your life in order to fulfill His plan.

- Open your eyes & see the faces of people around you.
 - Open your ears to hear what they're saying.
 - Today, tomorrow, next week you'll meet someone, someone who is just the right person you need to come along & fill the right place at just the right time & you will marvel knowing God arranged it beautifully.
 - If your goals are good, & they are pleasing to God, you will be respected.
 - The greatest way you can help other people is be what God made you to be.
 - Do what God made you to do.
 - You don't help anybody by being somebody you're not, living up to someone else's expectation, or living for someone else's approval.
 - But when you decide to be who God made you to be, & you serve God's purpose in your generation God will honor that & He will bless that.
 - Listen to Ezra 10:4. The people said to Ezra, "Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage & do it ."
 - Living a purpose driven life will attract cooperation.
 - And then the fifth benefit is, when I begin to discover & develop & fulfill God's purpose for my life;
- E. IT WILL PREPARE ME FOR GOD'S EVALUATION**
- God made you for a purpose -- There's a purpose for your being here.
 - God has invested certain gifts, talents & abilities in you; He's given them to you. - He doesn't expect you to use them just to make money here on earth.
 - God expects a return on His investment.
 - I believe there are two questions that we need to be able to answer before God in this regard. #1), "What did you do with My Son Jesus Christ?" & #2), "What did you do with your life?"
 - My goal is that ultimately you will end up with a life plan.
 - So that your life will be purpose driven.
 - Not just so that you will feel significant on earth, but also because when one day you stand before Almighty God, & He says, "What did you do with your life?" you've got the right answer.
 - You didn't waste it; you invested it -- You made it count -- You found what on earth you were here for.