

## Life's purpose - pleasing God

One of the greatest questions which people ask themselves is this 'why am I here?' Many philosophers have asked 'what is the purpose of life?' and many have even attempted to answer this question.

The meaning of life constitutes a philosophical question concerning the purpose and significance of human existence. This concept can be expressed through a variety of related questions, such as

- What is the meaning of life? What's it all about?
- Why are we here? What are we here for?
- What is the origin of life?
- What is the nature of life? What is the nature of reality?
- What is the purpose of life? What is one's purpose in life?
- What is the significance of life?
- What is meaningful and valuable in life?
- What is the value of life?
- What is the reason to live? What are we living for?

Albert Camus observed, 'we humans are creatures who spend our lives trying to convince ourselves that our existence is not absurd.'

Over many centuries religion, science and philosophy have tried to answer these question. Some of the most recent and popular life goals and basis for what people believe is the purpose of life is as follows:

- to realize one's potential and ideals
- to achieve biological perfection
- to seek wisdom and knowledge
- to do good, to do the right thing
- to attain spiritual enlightenment
- to love, to feel, to enjoy the act of living
- to have power, to be better
- One should not seek to know and understand the meaning of life
- Life has no meaning

In fact at the end of The Matrix Revolutions, Smith concludes that "the purpose of life is to end"

So what is truth? What does the Bible teach on this matter?

The New Testament speaks very clearly of God wanting to have a relationship with humans both in this life and the life to come, which can happen only if our sins are

forgiven (John 3:16-21). In the garden of Eden humankind was made in the image of God and perfect, but the Fall of Man caused our separation from God. Jesus death on the cross and resurrection has dealt with the issue of sin, for Romans 6:23 teaches (For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord)

In the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the first question is: What is the chief end of Man?, that is, What is Man's main purpose?. The answer is: **Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever.** God requires one to obey the revealed moral law saying: love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves

The purpose of life, our soul's purpose for existence is therefore to please God, and enjoy him forever! Despite popular teaching from both outside and within the church, life isn't about pleasing ourselves, it isn't about pleasing others, **it is about pleasing God.**

Firstly if you are not a Christian, and by that I mean having come to a real relationship with Christ, through the forgiveness of sin and being sealed with the Holy Spirit, there is absolutely nothing you can do to please God.

Isaiah 64:6- ' All of us have become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;  
we all shrivel up like a leaf,  
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

That means that the best thing we can can't bring us credit in our own right, we can't please God, because we are not connected to him, we can not be connected to him, because we have un-dealt-with sin. It is only through the rightness that Jesus gives to us, that we can be saved and then reunited with God.

I want to share with you an illustration that God gave me a few years ago while visiting an old persons home. While approaching the room, I was given a different message, a simple message that is as follows, I asked 'How many of you used to grow vegetables?' A few replied 'we did'. I then asked the next question 'what happens when you take a carrot, or a potatoes out of the ground and leave it somewhere. They answered 'It begins to rot' in other words it begins to die.

I then asked 'How many of you have ever been fishing?' again a few answer with 'yes'. I ask a very similar question, 'what happened when you take a fish out of water?' They replied to me 'It dies'

So I asked them, why does the carrot start to die when it is taken out of the soil, and why does a fish start to die when it is taken out of water.' The answer was quite simple, 'because fish were created for water they weren't made to be out of water and carrots were made to grow in the soil, not in our cupboards.'

The truth is the same for us, we were created to be in a relationship with God and to please God, outside of the situation we are just like the fish or the carrot, dying! We are not in the environment which we were made to live.

So the first thing you need to do is sort out your relationship with God.

But what about those of us then who have been saved by the blood of Christ? Well there is a man in the Bible called Enoch and the bible says in Hebrews 11:5 *'It was by faith that Enoch was taken to heaven so he would not die. He could not be found, because God had taken him away. Before he was taken, the Scripture says that he was a man who truly pleased God.'*

Could you imagine to leave this testimony, when it's all been said and done, what you are known for is 'someone who truly pleased God'. I mean if we fulfil this purpose, every other purpose has been fulfilled.

If everyone forgets all my achievements, but remembers me for someone who truly pleased God, my whole life's purpose has been fulfilled.

What it means to be a Christian is so much more than just praying a prayer or walking to the front of a church. It's more than putting some money in the offering every week. Being a Christian means being someone who doesn't please themselves but pleases God. A Christian isn't someone who keeps everyone happy all of the time, a Christian is someone who aims to glorify God all of the time.

Now in 2 Timothy 2:3-4 Paul says this *'Share in the troubles we have like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.<sup>4</sup> A soldier wants to please the enlisting officer, so no one serving in the army wastes time with everyday matters.'*

Paul is saying that we should live like good soldiers of Christ Jesus, not wasting our time with everyday matters, not trying to please ourselves but aiming to please Christ.

I worked for two years as a training co-ordinator at a Horticulture centre. There we used to grow many types of plants, but the most popular were greenhouse vegetables, cucumbers, tomatoes etc. When it came to harvesting the fruit that was grown, you would always have people complaining because someone else had more tomatoes than they did and could never understand why.

If you talk to anyone who works with plants or trees they will tell you there are something called 'sucker plants' and these are plants which attach themselves to a plant and suck the goodness out of it.

So when people used to be complaining about the number of tomatoes they would be picking, the biggest reason was always, not picking of the side shoots. They would then end up with a big, green healthy looking plant, but with no tomatoes.

You could tell people, over and over again, you need to pick your side shoots, but they wouldn't listen, they just enjoyed seeing the bush grow bigger and bigger, although every leaf, every side shoot would mean less energy for fruit.

We start living our Christian lives with so much excitement, but then we start letting things attach themselves to us, ungodly relationships, the next job promotion, a bigger car, new business contacts, and suddenly we are carry a lot of side shoots. There is a lot more calling on our energy then just producing fruit. Then all of the sudden we find ourselves entangled in a situation, just looking for any fruit in our lives.

Jesus in Mark 4:7 put it like this *'Some other seed fell among thorny weeds, which grew and choked the good plants. So those plants did not produce a crop.'*

*<sup>18</sup> Others are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. They hear the teaching,<sup>19</sup> but the worries of this life, the temptation of wealth, and many other evil desires keep the teaching from growing and producing fruit in their lives.'*

Jesus is saying, the seed started to grow, but didn't produce a crop. They didn't fulfil they purpose, they didn't produce any fruit, why? Verse 18, because the worries of this life, the temptations of wealth and many other evil desires.

Are the worries of this life stopping you producing fruit?

Or what about the temptations of wealth?

Or is it something else? Is there someone your trying to please more then God?

Friends lets not get entangled by the worries of this life, let us give them over to Christ so that we can product fruit for him. So that we can live lives which please him.

There is a really scary story in the bible and it's in Mark 11. The Bible says that *'<sup>12</sup> The next day as Jesus was leaving Bethany, he became hungry.<sup>13</sup> Seeing a fig tree in leaf from far away, he went to see if it had any figs on it. But he found no figs, only leaves, because it was not the right season for figs.<sup>14</sup> So Jesus said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And Jesus' followers heard him say this.'*

*<sup>20</sup> The next morning as Jesus was passing by with his followers, they saw the fig tree dry and dead, even to the roots.<sup>21</sup> Peter remembered the tree and said to Jesus, "Teacher, look! The fig tree you cursed is dry and dead!"*

*<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, "Have faith in God.'*

When we read passages like this in the bible, we need to be very careful that we don't just skip over them. Imagine with me, this is Jesus, kind Jesus, loving Jesus, but when he sees a tree that is not producing fruit he curses it.

When Jesus comes back, he isn't looking for nice green, shiny leaf Christians! He isn't looking for the Christian in the smartest suit, he isn't looking for one who put the most in the offering or has the biggest bible. He isn't even looking for the one who attended every church service. He is looking for the ones who are producing fruit.

It's not enough just to be shiny; it's not enough just to look green and healthy. We need to be producing fruit.

John 15:1-2

*<sup>1</sup> "I am the true vine; my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch of mine that does not produce fruit. And he trims and cleans every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit.*

Do you see this? It always hurts, if you're not producing fruit, if you're not part of the true vine, you get cut off. If you are producing fruit and part of the true vine, you still get cut back and trimmed, but so that you produce even more fruit.

This is what I am kind of trying to do right now, that you would look again at your life, think about what worries of this life have attached themselves to you. Which areas of your life don't belong to God. Which lusts have caught you and are pulling energy from you, that you should be spending for God. Which relationships are not producing fruit but moving you away from your relationship with God. What have you been working so hard to achieve, with much more energy than you use to serve God.

It's time to do some trimming. It's time to look at our lives and cut off those branches which don't produce God fruit that please God.

Matthew 3:10

*10 The ax is now ready to cut down the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

When you are cutting down a tree, you don't just swing at it, but first you move the axe close, then you tap the tree, you mark it and then you take the swing. There are many people who are already marked, this might even be you. You might not be in a relationship with God, you might not be producing good fruit. But today even today God is giving you the chance to contact or reconnect yourself to him.

He is giving you a chance to repent of your sin. To repent of those things you have allowed to attach themselves to you and pull you from him. He is willing today to deal with those things in your life. Even though the process might be painful, if you hand your life over to him, he will cut off the things which need cutting off, so that you shall produce fruit.

Revelations 3:15-16

*15 I know what you do, that you are not hot or cold. I wish that you were hot or cold! But because you are lukewarm—neither hot, nor cold—I am ready to spit you out of my mouth.*

Christian do you remember all the passion you had to serve Christ? Do you remember it was all you wanted to please him? Do you remember when you didn't only pray 'Glorify yourself through my life' but actually lived in a way, which allowed him to do this.

Let's stop getting caught up in second-class lukewarm Christian and let return to our first love once again, lets get passionate about serve Christ, let seek the Holy Spirit everyday and invite him to work through us. Let's fulfil our purpose in life, and live lives which please God!