

Hebrews 7:14-16

The Purpose of an Endless Life

Jesus promises us the same endless life that He Himself bought with His own blood... it is the grandest and most wonderful of offers, but it must be considered that this awesome gift has a greater depth and power than anything else we may desire. This power of an endless life must have a purpose! And this is the question we must ask and answer... What is the meaning, the purpose of this endless life? The greater the scope, the sweep, the limit of the life, the greater must the purpose be to sustain it - to attempt to live an endless life with no greater purpose than your own pleasures and desires is live an empty, vain and ultimately unfulfilling existence which will tax your very soul. Significance and purpose go hand in hand, power for its own sake is worthless and, in the final analysis, destructive to its user. But to have limitless life with a purpose that will sustain and propel that life is to possess the greatest of all gifts.

I. NOT FLESH

A. All is vanity was the cry of the preacher... all of the things that this life can be considered to be about are denounced as vanity, worthless and ultimately powerless to sustain us.

1. Work - *Ecclesiastes 1:2–3 (NKJV)* ² *“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher; “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”* ³ *What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun?*
2. Wisdom - *Ecclesiastes 1:16–17 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ *I communed with my heart, saying, “Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge.”* ¹⁷ *And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind.*
3. Pleasure - *Ecclesiastes 2:10–11 (NKJV)* ¹⁰ *Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor.* ¹¹

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.

4. Skill - *Ecclesiastes 4:4 (NKJV)* ⁴ *Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.*
5. Popularity - *Ecclesiastes 4:16 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ *There was no end of all the people over whom he was made king; Yet those who come afterward will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and grasping for the wind.*
6. Wealth - *Ecclesiastes 5:13–15 (NKJV)* ¹³ *There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt. ¹⁴ But those riches perish through misfortune; When he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand. ¹⁵ As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labor Which he may carry away in his hand.*

7. A pleasant life - *Ecclesiastes 11:7–8 (NKJV)* ⁷
*Truly the light is sweet, And it is pleasant for
the eyes to behold the sun; ⁸ But if a man lives
many years And rejoices in them all, Yet let him
remember the days of darkness, For they will
be many. All that is coming is vanity.*

B. It is worth noting that these things, these self-centered and self-satisfying things are the toxic hope of fallen man. They are packaged up in dreams of sex, drugs and rock-n-roll. They are expressed in the desire for limitless wealth with no personal responsibility, in the promise of power without consequence... we see the effect of these empty promises in the broken systems all around us and with only a modicum of thought we see that they are hopelessly void of any power to sustain a man over the course of this life...

C. If they are too weak to sustain THIS life, it must also be acknowledged that they are far too weak to sustain the next life... NOT AN ETERNAL PURPOSE.

1. So those who dream of a heaven that looks like this life, only without limit, are lying to

themselves. They foolishly dream of a life without purpose and without meaning.

2. Heaven MUST have more or it is hell!

II. PURPOSE IN THIS LIFE -

A. We can follow this line of reasoning and examine some possible options for defining a meaning for life and a motive for delineating the boundaries of our actions and intents.

B. Judgment awaits

1. The preacher gives to us a look at the purpose of this life at the end of Ecclesiastes... his summary statement is worth considering.

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. ¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

2. The Apostle Paul gives us similar advice in 2 Corinthians 5...

2Corinthians 5:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things

done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. ¹¹ Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

3. Both of these passages seem to tell us that we are to live this life with an eye to pleasing God in light of the coming judgment...
4. Judgment is real and it is final... but eternity still waits AFTER judgment. - NOT AN ETERNAL PURPOSE

C. Christ is to be proclaimed - Evangelism.

1. Jesus Himself said that preaching was one of His key purposes. –

Mark 1:38 (NKJV) ³⁸ But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.”

2. Paul declared that he could overlook personal insult and hurt so long as Christ was preached...

Philippians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: ¹⁶ The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to

my chains; ¹⁷ but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

3. The Apostles declared that the preaching of the Gospel was the main thing that they were concerned with, and that they would let others do the more practical works in the church so that they could devote themselves to the WORD...

Acts 6:2–4 (NKJV) ² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

4. Paul instructed Timothy that there was no greater command or charge by which he could constrain him...

2Timothy 4:1–5 (NKJV) ¹ I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living

and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

5. But Christ will no longer need to be proclaimed to the lost in the presence of the Father - the task of evangelism will be completed... so evangelism is NOT AN ETERNAL PURPOSE

D. Honoring Christ...

1. This is closer to the mark... we are called to honor the Christ who is the very image of God... to give Him the allegiance, obedience and love that is His due. This also informs our evangelism, for we ought not proclaim Christ with a lesser motive than the glory of Christ and the dessert of His own reward. We preach

Christ so that the Lamb who was slain would receive the reward of His own suffering! But honor alone is not enough... we must honor Him from a place of knowledge and understanding...

2. Consider Jesus' response to the opening salvo of the rich young ruler...

Mark 10:17–18 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

3. This knowledge is the fruit of God having opened our eyes...

2Corinthians 3.16 - 4.6

- a. Veil removed
- b. Liberty granted
- c. Seeing God as He is
- d. Transformed by that sight
- e. Walk in truth and open glory
- f. Truth dictates our speech and our action
- g. Those outside are blind to truth

- h. But God is glorious and shows us in the person of Christ, His own perfect glory and worth!

III. KNOWING CHRIST

- A. This knowledge IS in fact the one thing that Jesus told us is the meaning and very definition of life...

John 17:3 (NKJV) ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

- B. And John says that apart from knowing Christ life is not even IN us!

1John 5:12 (NKJV) ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

- C. The whole point of ALL the scripture is to testify of Christ

Luke 24:25–27 (NKJV) ²⁵ Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

John 5:39 (NKJV) ³⁹ You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

D. The Law itself was but a tutor to bring us to Christ...

Galatians 3:21–24 (NKJV) ²¹ Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

E. And the promise of God is that we WILL know Him, even as we ourselves are known...

1Corinthians 13:11–13 (NKJV)¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know

just as I also am known. ¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

F. Here is the point of the call to redeem that time which has been given to us here and now, to make it count for something that will last...

Ephesians 5:15–21 (NKJV) ¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Colossians 4:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

G. And here at last is the heart of this question of purpose. What is capable of sustaining us for all of eternity? Is it not only the infinite God? Can there be anything in all the world or in all the

cosmos that is enough to sustain all of God's people for all of endless eternity? Of course the answer is the manifest glory of God. And unsurprisingly, we find that the worship of God in truth is the heart of the experience of heaven...

Revelation 4.2 - 5.14

IV. GLORIFYING THE TRIUNE GOD

- A. The heart of our eternal purpose lies here, in the worship of heaven centered around the throne of God. The rest of the things that have eternal scope and value, for instance honoring Christ, evangelism, works of mercy and our worship here on earth all send on before us the raw materials of our worship there. They give to us the capacity to worship and glorify God in the presence of His undiluted majesty.
- B. For instance, Paul speaks of the crowns that he has earned and testifies that they await his coming in heaven...

1. 1Corinthians 9:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

2. *Philippians 4:1 (NKJV) ¹ Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.*
3. *1Thessalonians 2:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*
4. *2Timothy 4:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*
5. *James 1:12 (NKJV) ¹² Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*
6. *1Peter 5:4 (NKJV) ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*
7. *Revelation 2:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you*

will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

8. *Revelation 3:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*

C. But what is the purpose of the crowns in heaven?

1. They are worship fodder...

a. *Revelation 4:3–4 (NKJV) ³ And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. ⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.*

b. *Revelation 4:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns*

before the throne, saying: ¹¹ “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

D. And from what do our fine clothes and linens come?

Revelation 19:6–9

1. They are clean and beautiful because CHRIST has made them so...

Ephesians 5:25–27 (NKJV) ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

E.The heart of the glory of heaven is the unfiltered presence of God Himself...

Revelation 21:2–7

F.He Himself is the light, the glory and the very purpose of heaven...

Revelation 22:1–5

G. And ANY purpose that is not centered in the glory and worship of God in Christ is not only not

found in heaven, neither shall be those who practice such...

Revelation 22:12–17