

What is the Purpose of Life?

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Why Do I Exist?

There are many reasons people think for why we exist.

- Some exist for a career and personal achievement.
- Some feel like their purpose in life is to marry. Others are committed to singleness. Sometimes even the church and Christian colleges give the impression that marriage is the goal of life. Marriage is good but not the purpose of life. Sometimes, we can exalt marriage as the goal of the Christian life. And once that goal is achieved, we might be tempted to forget God's greater purpose for our lives and the meaning of life. When marriage becomes the highest desire, our lives revolve around getting married.
- Happiness is the ultimate goal every human should have and should be the center of every decision you take.
- The goal of life is to achieve happiness not only for oneself but others as well; it is to lead a meaningful life that enables one to fulfill basic and more advanced needs, such as self-actualization, and contribute to the betterment of society.
- We live because of the happy things. We live because there are people who love us, and people we love back. We live because we want to find out things, and learn, and become able to do things that we would like to do. We live because others want us to, and we want them to live along with us.
- To achieve the financial independence to stop working and live a life of leisure pursuing my hobbies.
- To own a tiny house in the countryside with chickens and a corgi. It is such a simple list but it seems so unobtainable.
- Be able to support my family both financially and emotionally. Be in a position to leave my kids and grandkids with something, whether it be financial help or advice (preferably both).
- Some people live in, "if only" land. If only I was more sin. If only I was more successful. If only I had a more outgoing personality. These things would fulfill their lives and give them meaning.

The truth is, you and I were created to bring glory to God in all aspects of life. 1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Corinthians 5:9, Isaiah 43:7, and Romans 11:36 all remind us:

- So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God
- So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.
- God created all of us for his glory
- For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.

The Bible focuses more on our relationship with God than on human relationships, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. "(Matthew 22:37).

God didn't redeem us for the purpose of earthly marriage, a successful career, personal achievement, or to finally arrive in "if only" land.

The friend who is ministering the Word is concerned with the spiritual transformation of the one in need, not only to change, but to glorify God through the process – thus, assisting our brothers and sisters in becoming more conformed to Christ's image.

Jay Adams writes, "The goal of sanctification is not only to put off the works of the flesh, but in its place to put on the fruit of the Spirit. It is the Spirit's fruit, not in the sense that He is the tree that bears it, but (rather) that He is the One Who has both planted (regeneration) and cultivated it (sanctification).

The qualities of life described by the list of items in Galatians 5:22, 23, called "fruit," are appropriately named. The figure of speech (fruit) denotes something that grows. Growth is gradual; man can assist producing it but cannot initiate it or assure its production. Fruit cannot be manufactured, but growth may be promoted by providing such important elements as light, water, nutrients, etc. The growth of fruit depends upon care and cultivation. Helpers, ministering the Word, work under the Spirit in His orchard, to provide such care."¹

So, what does it mean to glorify God in all aspects of our lives?

Based on the Scripture we have just read, there are a few ways that we can glorify God throughout our lives.

The first is to glorify God by demonstrating the greatness of his character. For many Christians this has become difficult as we get caught up in the busyness of life. There is an awe that is missing in our vision of God. Maybe we once had it, but for most adults it is gone.

When I was a very little boy my hero was Superman. I would watch him on television as he broke through walls, picked people up, and could see through things. But what captured my imagination most was Superman's ability to fly. Many of my childhood fantasies were about flying. I wanted to fly! I honestly believed that flying was a possibility. Sneaking into my parents linen closet I would grab the largest beach towel I could to make a cape. Because, I knew that without a cape, one could not fly. I would jump off the highest thing I could pretending to fly through the air cape waving in the breeze.

Then came a day when, without warning, without provocation, I woke up, never to wear the cape again. I knew flying was nothing more than a childhood fantasy. I would never fly, and there was no Superman. In retrospect, that was a very sad day because deep within me a sense of awe had died.

This was a repeated idea last Sunday morning when we were challenged to, never recover from the awe, glory, and majesty of God and his mercy and grace to us.

¹ Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, page 249

Paul Tripp writes, “I am aware that I need to spend more time gazing upon the beauty of the Lord. I need to put my heart in a place where it can once again be in awe of the grandeur of God that reaches far beyond the bounds of the most expressive words in the human vocabulary. I need all of him to recapture, refocus, and redirect my heart again and again. I need to remember that the war for the awe of my heart still wages inside of me.”²

Next, to glorify God is to function according to God’s design in all aspects of life. What do I mean by this? What does this look like? Begin by asking yourself a couple questions:

1. Why am I being blessed with money and how am I to spend it that glorifies God? Do I need to adjust the way I spend my money to better please him?
2. How am I to relate to my fellow man that glorifies God?
3. How am I glorifying God in the way that I serve others in all aspects of my life resulting in men giving praise and honor to God as a result of my behavior?
4. The last time you had an argument with your spouse, boss, parents, friends – was the greatness of God on your mind? Were you concerned with pleasing him during that situation?
5. When you became angry or frustrated - was the greatness of God on your mind or were you thinking about yourself?

So glorifying God has to do with my:

- Character
- Conduct
- Commitments
- Conversations

What are the overarching goals I need to accomplish to fulfill my purpose?

You are to focus on pleasing God through seeking to determine what pleases God? Paul writes to the Ephesians in chapter 5, “...at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true) and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:8-10)

We are called to know God intimately, in that the way Jesus prayed in John 17:3, “and this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” To know God intimately is more than intellectually knowledge. It is experiential knowledge. We don’t just learn about God’s sufficiency – we experience it. We don’t just learn about God’s mercy – we experience it.

We are to become like Jesus Christ to maturity in all aspects of life. We are being transformed. We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:15b-16)

² Paul David Tripp, *Awe, Why it Matters for Everything we Think, Say, or Do*. Crossway, page 12.

As I get to know him, I will become like him. I will match the will of God by the way my character is transformed.

We are to become/be useful to God in his service. Knowing him, becoming like him, and being useful to him.

This is the question to ask, “Is what I am doing in life helping me know him, become like him, and serve him?” If not, my “work” is simply an activity.

Am I helping myself and others “grow up in Christ?”

It is important to go through the Bible, but how many times has the Bible gone through you?

And so, what steps do I need to take to fulfill my purpose?

You must hear what to obey, then obey what you hear from God’s Word in all aspects of your life. We must be doers of the Word and not strictly hearers of the Word. We must learn to trust in the Lord with all our hearts, not leaning on our own understanding. We must acknowledge his ways that make our paths straight, fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

When you have the power to obey and refuse to obey you have either forgotten the reason you are to obey God, or you are just walking in sinful stubbornness.

The problems you have in life are not caused by the character deficiencies of others; they are caused by us not following God’s instructions.

Pulling it All Together – we glorify and please God in our lives by believing his Word in an obeying way.

How do we hear to obey?

1. Learn the truth of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2:15, Psalm 1:1-3, 119:104-105)
2. We spend time in the Bible
3. We study the Bible according to the areas of life where we are looking for answers. God’s Word isn’t just for us to know things.
4. Understand that God’s instructions are a means to an end:
 - If we obey him, we will know him
 - If we obey him, we will become like him
 - If we obey him, we will be useful to him
 - As we obey, we will experience a tremendous sense of joy
5. Live the truth of God we have learned (James 1:19-22, Psalm 119:101-102)
 - We often learn but don’t live.
 - God doesn’t stop being God when we don’t follow his instruction. It is you and I who are affected.
 - God’s Word is for our protection and provision
6. Love others through the truth of God you have learned and are living (John 13:34-35, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Ephesians 4:16-17)
 - I learn the truth, I live the truth, I love others through my living by what I have learned – AND GOD IS GLORIFIED!

Reflect and Respond

- Am I going through trial right now because I am obeying God or because I am ignoring God's instruction?
- Maybe you are swimming in a circle because the purpose of your life has not been to glorify God, but to please yourself.
- How many of the problems in your life are caused by your consistent and complete following of God and how many are caused by you not obeying what God has instructed you to do?