

## **WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE IN LIFE???**

One of the most persistent questions in the minds of both youth and adults is: “What is my purpose in life?” In order to understand why God made us and what His will is for our lives, it is essential to know the ways and callings of God.

A preacher made this observation concerning God’s will – “Many Christians are waiting their entire lives to hear from God concerning His will for them and miss it expecting some type of supernatural spiritual experience. God’s will is doing what he already told us to do in His Word.”

### **Three basic aspects of the ways of God**

Birth of a Vision -- Each one of us has a special purposes for being here. God wants to reveal them to us.

Examples: Abraham had a vision to be the father of a great nation

Joseph had a vision that he would be a great leader and that many would bow down to him.

Moses had the vision of leading the Israelites out of Egypt.

The disciples of Christ had a vision of establishing and being part of the Kingdom of God.

Death of a Vision – The expectations God gives are powerful motivations to continue during discouragement.

Sarah was barren and became too old to have children

Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery.

Pharaoh drove Moses out of Egypt after his first attempt to relieve the Jews bondage

Jesus was killed by the very ones He came to save, and the disciples saw Him buried in a tomb.

Supernatural fulfillment of the original vision – He usually fulfills our expectations in ways that we never would have thought.

God gave Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age who became the father of a great nation.

God allowed Joseph to interpret the dreams of the butler and baker and later the king, whereupon, he was made a ruler in the land.

God gave Moses signs and wonders to convince Pharaoh and his people that God was speaking through him to lead the nation to Canaan.

God raises Jesus from the dead, and great miracles were performed by the disciples until the Gospel had spread throughout the world.

### **The need for the death of a vision**

When we begin to understand His ways, we see the great value in going through the Death of a Vision.

Birth of a vision – Visualizing what God intends to do in my life.

Death of a vision – Anticipating and expecting God to work out His revealed will in my life even when it doesn't seem possible.

Fulfillment of a vision – The motivation to reproduce Christ's character in others as He has done in me.

- God's building program during the death of a vision.

Since God is far more concerned with our becoming like Jesus Christ in character than He is with our doing good works to further His kingdom, He needs this time of waiting to accomplish character building.

The vision provides the motivation not to become discouraged. This time of death and character building prepares us for a greater ministry when He does fulfill the vision.

Qualities formed during this time:

Meekness in yielding personal rights  
Self-control in not running ahead of God

- Satan's building program during the death of a vision.

Satan's purpose is to destroy God's work in our lives and also as much of the potential for achieving God's work as he can. To do this during this time he comes as an angel of light to deceive as many as possible (II Cor. 11:14)

He prompts us to try in our own energy and wisdom to fulfill the original vision. He doesn't want us to learn God's qualities, and whenever we follow Satan's leading, conflict results. (Abraham and Ishmael)

### **Defining God's Purpose in Life**

God's ultimate purpose for each one of us is that we become more and more like His Son. Then, His purpose is that we reproduce His life in the lives of others.

- God's purpose is spiritual maturity

Whatever our vocation may be, our primary goal should be that of Colossians 1:28, "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ."

- What does it mean to bring every man to his full maturity?

It means building the principles of God's Word into a person's life so that he is equipped to understand and follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit in knowing how to respond to any situation with Christ-like attitudes.

- How does God prepare us to accomplish this?

He allows problems, irritations, and responsibilities to come into our lives so that we are motivated to search out His Word and develop the full potential which he put within our lives.

### **God has given us gifts in all three parts of our being:**

Spirit – He has given us certain spiritual aptitudes, abilities, gifts and capacities.

Soul – He's given us mental, emotional and volitional (conscience choice) aptitudes, abilities, and capacities.

Body – We have also been given physical abilities and capacities.

- God knows that, left to ourselves, many of us would only develop a small portion of the aptitudes, abilities and capacities which He has put within us.
- To the degree that we don't develop these aptitudes, abilities, and capacities we experience boredom in our lives.

- Therefore, in order to direct and motivate us in developing the rest, God chooses to bring into our lives certain problems, irritations, and responsibilities.

### **Basic Insights on Knowing God's Will**

- God's will involves people

God so loved the world He gave His Son. It is too easy for us to become more concerned about things and organizations than people. If this happens we will miss the real joy of knowing God's will.

- Knowing basic needs removes fear of people

Many people have a fear of talking to other people. There is a way, however, of overcoming this fear. If we were walking down a neighborhood street and happened to see a gathering of people sitting in the front room of one of the homes, we would probably experience a certain fear about the idea of intruding in their gathering.

If we saw that the roof of their home was on fire, we would overcome our fear. We would be sure that the message we had to give them was one which they needed to hear. We would also be quite confident that they would immediately recognize the importance of the message.

I John 4:17, 18 "In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

- God has a special concern for Christians

It is quite easy for us to become discouraged with the spiritual maturity of some Christians and decide that we will not bother with them but instead will concentrate on reaching those who have never heard the gospel.

We must reach those who haven't heard but in determining God's will for our lives, one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves is: "How can I help the Christians around me to mature and by so doing, beautify the Body of Christ?"

- We are to assume responsibility for the reputation of the Lord Jesus Christ

When one member of the Body of Christ sins or displays spiritual immaturity, the reputation of Christ is damaged and the whole Body of Christ suffers. Because of this we are to “exhort one another daily...lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Heb 3:13. We are to “lay down our lives for the brethren.” I John 3:16

- Three types of Christians exist in most church groups

Those who are cold; those who are spiritually hot; and those who are lukewarm.

Rev. 3:15-17 – “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”

Lukewarm Christians are nauseating to God.

#### The Needs of Cold, Hot, and Lukewarm Christians

Hot Christians - Need Christ

Cold Christians – Need the World

Luke-warm Christians – Say “I have need of nothing.”

II Chron. 7:14 – “if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

I Pet. 4:17 – “For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

- God's will involves leading those for whom we are responsible to spiritual maturity

When we determine which individuals are under our spiritual care and purpose to give ourselves to the high calling of leading them to spiritual maturity, we have established the basis for a fulfilling ministry for our lives. Then, as God allows us to experience death to our natural inclinations and discover His ways of responding to life situations, we are able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort by which we were comforted (II Cor. 1:4)

- We are responsible to deepen our message. God is responsible to broaden our ministry.

We are prone to be concerned with how many people we are reaching with the Gospel. But God is concerned that we bring those we reach to spiritual maturity. "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:" Col. 1:28 Those who become mature are then able to reproduce the life and character of Christ in others as well.

John 14:15 – "If you love me, you will obey what I command."

John 21:15-17 tells us that sheep reproduce sheep.

- God's will involves the "message" we develop more than the "Job" we are doing.

As we personally mature in Christ by putting off the old man and its desires and apply the principles of the Word to our lives, we build a "life message."

God desires that each one of us become a "living epistle."

God has chosen us and ordained us that we should go and bring forth fruit and that our fruit should remain. John 15:16

- Achieving spiritual maturity involves responding to eight callings:

II Pet 1:4 – "Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

Give all diligence to the following 8 Callings:

- Repentance of Salvation -- Called to give Christ His rightful place at the center of your life. **(FAITH)** Rom 10:9

- Separation from darkness – Discern and turn from evil in all its forms  
(**Virtue**) I Pe. 2:9
- Dedication to the light – Commit yourself to the light of Scripture.  
(**Knowledge**) Rom 12:2
- Investment in service – Become involved in lasting achievement (**Self-Control**) Mt 6:19
- Endurance in suffering – Expect to be misunderstood (**Endurance**) I Pe. 4:12
- Humility in responses – Respond as God would to those who wrong you.  
(**Godliness**) Rom 8:29
- Alertness in sharing – Be alert to others who have been hurt. (**Brotherly Kindness**) II Cor. 1:4
- Reproduction of Maturity – Guide them through the same steps God has taken you. (**Love**) Col. 1:29

**“Our witness increases as we fully obey each calling”**

**Our calling: “To Become The Most Effective Translator of Spiritual Truth”**

**GOD’S “STAR WITNESS” IS ONE WHO HAS A VITAL MESSAGE AND MUST BE AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES TO SHARE IT**

## **Defining the eight callings:**

“To the degree that we respond to each of the 8 callings, we increase the scope of our “life message” and thereby experience the will of God for our lives.”

- **The Calling of Salvation**

- Receive salvation by Grace through faith
- Not of works of righteousness which we have done

Large numbers of those who have professed to receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior continue to have doubts from time to time as to whether or not they really are Christians.

### Five causes of doubting salvation

- “Second Thoughts” about childhood decisions – This often not only results in doubts about salvation, but may motivate some to doubt God’s existence.
- An unforgiving spirit toward an offender
- An unwillingness to make past offenses right
- A particular sin we are unwilling to give up
- A point of pride in becoming a Christian

## **How is salvation confirmed?**

- By Confession of the mouth:

Romans 10:9-10 – “That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

Romans 10:13 –“ For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

- By confirmation of the Holy Spirit:

Romans 8:16 – “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

- By confession through baptism:

Romans 6:4 – “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

*(When the early Christians were baptized, for many it meant being disowned, persecuted and rejected.)*

### **Six Evidences of Salvation**

- New awareness of right and wrong

There will be a greater awareness of words, thoughts, and actions which do not please the Lord

John 16:8 – “When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.”

Romans 7:18-25 “For I know that in me ... dwells no good thing.”

I John 5:19 – “We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”

- Hunger for God’s Word

Job 23:12 – “... I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.”

Jer. 15:16 – “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty.”

Heb 5:14 – “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

- Desire for a changed life

II Cor. 5:17 – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

- Increase in testing

Lk. 6:22 – “Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.”

II Tim. 3:12 – “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,”

- Love for other Christians

I Jn. 4:11 – “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

- Desire to tell others about Christ

Ps 107:2 – “Let the redeemed of the LORD say so ...”

I Pet 3:15 – “...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”

### **The Calling of Separation**

One of the greatest causes of diminishing the potential of our life message is the failure to turn from all the thoughts, words and actions which we know grieve the Spirit of God.

*Either we separate ourselves from our sins or our sins will separate us from fellowship with God.*

Is. 59:2 – “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

### **Chart**

*We are not only to separate ourselves from those things which cause us to stumble, but also from the practices which cause our “weaker brother” to be offended: (Rom 14:12-15)*

## **The Calling of Dedication**

Dedication is the mature action of giving to God what really belongs to Him already. We are then free to set our affections on things above rather than on things of this earth.

- **It is not enough to turn from that which is evil. We must also turn to that which is good.**

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.  
2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Roman 12:1-2

- As we dedicate ourselves to God’s Word, we gain knowledge for greater dedication

“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;” II Pet. 1:5

## **The Calling of Service**

- II Pet 1:6 – Tells us to add to your knowledge temperance (Greek enkrateia – Self-control – holding passions and desires in check. Self-control is the basis of fruitful Christian service. With self-control we do not serve ourselves, but we are morally free to serve one another.

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” Gal. 5:13

- Service involves laying up treasures in heaven and building spiritual maturity in the lives of those around us.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Mt 6:19-21

- Men keep looking for better methods and God keeps looking for better men.

## The Calling of Suffering

“Add to your temperance endurance ...” II Pet 1:6

- Suffering is essential in order to experience the final 3 callings:

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice ...” I Pet 4:12

- Suffering will usually come from people you least expect.

Our Lord was rejected by the very people whom he had taught and fed and healed. He was put to death by those who were more familiar with the Scriptures than anyone else.

David after being turned upon by His friends: “They repay me evil for good and leave my soul forlorn. Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother. But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee;... (Ps. 35:12- 15)

“If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.” Ps. 55:12-14.

- Suffering is designed to open up new sections of Scripture to us.

We don't fully appreciate Scripture until we experience it. When we do, new insights are revealed that we will need in our life message.

As we turn to God's Word as a result of suffering, our meditation will reveal new insights as we read that Scripture in light of our present circumstances.

- Suffering is God's way of freeing us from that which hinders us from “setting our affections on things above.” (Col. 3:2)

When the three friends of Daniel were thrown into the fiery furnace, the only things that the fire burned were the ropes that tied them down. God's purpose is the same for us. He wants to free us from the multitude of cares which we think are essential, but which in reality only hinder us from true achievement.

- Suffering is most painful when we are partly at fault.

When we suffer after doing everything right, we are able to sing for joy as Paul and Silas did in prison. But usually most of our “fiery furnaces” are as a result of doing the right things in the wrong way. God intends to use the fire to purify our lives from wrong motives, attitudes, words, or actions. For this purpose it is essential to spend much time in Scripture and prayer.

### **The Calling of Humility**

“Add to your endurance godliness ...” II Pet 1:6

When we humble ourselves through the suffering God allows, He gives us more grace both to respond to our offenders and to see new, rich insights into His Word.

#### **Humility is the basis for godliness.**

- Godliness involves worth-ship or reverence paid to worth, whether in God or man.
- A godly response to those who offended us would be to recognize that God has only used them to put us through a “fire” that will be for our ultimate benefit if we respond to it and to them in the right way.
- God is far more concerned with our responses than He is with our experiences.

His purpose is that we be partakers of His divine nature.

“Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” II Pet 1:4

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Rom. 8:28.

## **The Calling of Understanding**

“Add to your brotherly kindness love ...” II Pet 1:7

The reward of going through suffering and responding to it in the right way is a new ability to understand the real needs of those around us.

- Brotherly kindness involves love of the brethren, alertness to their needs, and gentleness in meeting them.
- Before we go through the “fire” we may tend to regard Christian work on the basis of its being merely an organization and people functioning as part of it. But when the fire burns away the stubble of human achievement, we have a new ability to sense the real needs of the people around us.
- We can sense when they have been hurt, and they are able to sense that we would understand if they told us about it.

This is the reward of suffering. “If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.” (I Pet. 4:14)

## **The Calling of Spiritual Maturity**

“Add to your brotherly kindness love ...” I Pet. 1:7

When others sense that we would understand if they told us about their problems, and if we gained insights from Scripture through our suffering, we have the basis of leading many to spiritual maturity.

- God does not want our work for Him to be in vain or to lack lasting results.  

“For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (II Pet 1:8).

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last... “ (John 15:16).
- Lasting results will not occur unless we respond to all eight callings.  

“But if anyone does not have them, he is short-sighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. (II Pet 1:9)

- God allows us to go through “fires” so that we can build in others what we learn through them.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” (II Cor. 1:3-4)

- Before we go through the “fire” we can go and tell others about the Christian life, but after we respond properly to our “fire” they come to us for this information.

“But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,... “ (I Pet 3:14-15).

- Those we lead to Christ will be far more faithful if we prepare them for suffering and if they see that we have gone through that same suffering.

Before Christ died His disciples forsook Him and fled in the face of suffering. Afterward they endured it with Joy.

- Each time God takes us through these eight callings our understanding of them grows deeper, and our ability to lead others to spiritual maturity grows greater.