

LESSON SIX
NEW PURPOSE
SERVING OTHERS FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

Q: What is the Chief End of Man?

A: Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever
--Westminster Confession of Faith, Shorter Catechism

We never seem to be satisfied with what we possess or achieve; we are restless and crave what is novel. As Plato puts it, we are like leaky vessels. It is as though we were containers into which we keep pouring things, but we never get filled up because there is a hole in each container and something is always leaking out. . . . So we spend our lives trying to attain fullness, satisfaction, and completeness, and yet we never do. We go on thinking that if we only we had just a bit more, then we would be satisfied; if we had something else, then our potential would be realized, our happiness assured, and our fulfillment achieved.

— Diogenes Allen

I am plagued by doubts. What if everything is an illusion and nothing exists? In that case, I definitely paid too much for my apartment.

— Woody Allen

You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.
-- Augustine

This lesson focuses on how the Gospel provides us with a life direction. Our direction is given because we will stand before God to be evaluated. He will review every facet of our lives to discern if it was lived according to his word and for his glory. Most people today are looking for a life purpose, a story large enough to live for. Christianity is the only story that makes sense of life.

The Discovery of Purpose

There are many passages of the Bible which speak of the Gospel becoming the purpose of life.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.
Matthew 13:44-46

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith- that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death .
Philippians 3:7-10

The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One. Many ordinary treasures may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them, the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be necessary to his happiness. Or if he must see them go, one after one, he will scarcely feel a sense of loss, for having the Source of all things he has in One all satisfaction, all pleasure, all delight. Whatever he may lose he has actually lost nothing, for he now has it all in One, and he has it purely, legitimately and forever.

A..W. Tozer

The Gospel and Purpose

The Gospel gives us purpose in a surprising way – by leading us to forget ourselves.

Egocentric persons curve in on themselves. With only their own interests at heart, and only their own future in view, they eventually harden themselves into a small snail-like shell.

Cornelius Plantinga Jr.

According to God's intelligence, the way to thrive is to help others to thrive; the way to flourish is to cause others to flourish; the way to fulfill yourself is to spend yourself. Jesus himself tried to get this lesson across to his disciples by washing their feet, hoping to ignite a little of the trinitarian life in them.

Cornelius Plantinga Jr.

1. The Gospel frees us from self centeredness with perfect redemptive love

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.
2 Corinthians 5:14-15

2. The Gospel removes us from a vain life

. . . knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 1 Peter 1:18-19

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.
1 Corinthians 15:58

Living the Gospel

Gospel driven purpose is worked out in the details of life and the church. Godly lives commend the Gospel. The Gospel creates godly lives.

Churches are microcosms of the Kingdom of God. Knowing that God calls his people to be the sign, foretaste and herald of the kingdom we must regularly be asking ourselves as a congregation: How are we doing at living out the gospel of the kingdom? As the proper expression of the gospel are we regularly addressing our world's woundedness and striving to bring healing to it?
Fred Harrell and Tim Keller

1. We commend the Gospel by doing good

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:9-10

2. We commend the Gospel by godliness in life, work, and in the home

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 1 Peter 2:13-15

One of our favorite texts shows how we serve God's purpose by living out the Gospel in the details of our lives, according to our distinctive roles. Paul assumes that our lives are public and open to evaluation by outsiders.

But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so

*train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, **that the word of God may not be reviled.***

*Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that **cannot be condemned**, so that **an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.***

*Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, **so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.***
Titus 2:1-10

It is not only prayer that gives God glory but work. Smiting on an anvil, sawing a beam, whitewashing a wall, driving horses, sweeping, scouring, everything gives God some glory if being in his grace you do it as your duty. To go to communion worthily gives God great glory, bt a man with a dungfork in his hand, a woman with a sloppail, give him glory too. He is so great that all things give him glory if you mean they should.

G M Hopkins

3. We commend the Gospel by explaining it to others

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20

4. We commend the Gospel by church planting

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Acts 14:21-23

"The Goal of the Great Commission is the establishment of a church of committed Christians in every community, every neighborhood, every class and condition of people, where everyone can hear and see demonstrated the gospel from his own intimates, in his own tongue, and has a reasonable opportunity to become a disciple of Jesus Christ."

Cited by Dave Harvey. Sovereign Grace Ministries, from Donald McGavran.

"We believe that church planting is the most effective way to evangelize any people, and only by the multiplication of churches can any nation be thoroughly evangelized."

Don Chaney, Church Planting, xi.

Today, western Christianity--with its emphasis on the individual--manufactures a missiological formula that looks something like this:

The Gospel + The Individual Believer = World Evangelism.

The New Testament formula for evangelism however, appeared to add an additional strategic component:

*The Gospel + The Individual Believer + **The Local Church** = World Evangelization*

Dave Harvey, Sovereign Grace Ministries

But if we cannot know for what reason one was chosen, we can most certainly know for what purpose he was chosen: he was chosen in order to be a fruit-bearing branch of the one true vine (John 15:16), a witness through whom others might be saved. He is chosen in order that through him God's saving purpose may reach to others, and they too be reconciled to God in and through His reconciled and reconciling people. . . . And we can also see that wherever the missionary character of the doctrine of election is forgotten; wherever it is forgotten that we are chosen in order to be sent; wherever the minds of believers are concerned more to probe backwards from their election into the reasons for it in the secret counsel of God than to press forward from their election to the purpose of it, which is that they should be Christ's ambassadors and witnesses to the ends of the earth; wherever men think that the purpose of election is their own salvation rather than the salvation of the world; then God's people have betrayed their trust.

Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God*

Some thoughts on Advancing the Gospel in our Day

1. Live in a post Christian age. No longer have a common vocabulary with common meanings. People have prejudices to the Gospel.
2. Evangelism is first of all **out there**.
 - a. Non-believer invite to church to conversion and relationship – OLD
 - b. Non believer invite to relationship to conversion to the church
 - c. Evangelism is character based
 - d. Evangelism is mini-decisions and long term
3. Evangelism must include the church – the new community
 - a. The church must function with the unbeliever in mind
 - b. Open the doors and windows so they can see the new life and new community in the Gospel.
 - c. Preaching still crucial in evangelism

GRACE CHURCH SAN DIEGO **NEW LIFE, NEW COMMUNITY, NEW PURPOSE**

OUR PURPOSE **BUILDING NEW LIVES AND NEW COMMUNITIES IN THE GOSPEL**

“I simply argue that the cross should be raised at the center of the marketplace as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on the town's garbage heap; at the crossroad, so cosmopolitan they had to write his title in Hebrew and Latin and Greek . . . at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where he died. And that is what he died for. And, that is what he died about. That is where churchmen ought to be and what churchmen ought to be about.” (George MacLeod of Iona).