



Topic: Living On Purpose
(Tapping Into God's Plan for My Living)

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you;
I ordained you a prophet to the nations.*

~Jeremiah 1:5 (NKJV)~

Introduction to the Lesson

Have you ever thought to yourself “why am I here; what was I born to do or what is my purpose in life”? If you have considered these thoughts concerning your existence, know that it’s a good thing. So many people live life taking in every experience life brings their way and never for one moment do they question what their true purpose in life is. I say “true purpose” because so often people live what other people say concerning them. Children grow up to live out dreams their parents had but never fulfilled. Some People live under the title or beliefs of other people as to who they are. Life is too short and too precious to go through living out of a misconception of what you were truly born to do; what your true purpose in life is. Living life as if all there is to living is the opinion of others or living under the definition given by your experiences in life. We were not born to be defined by what we go through (our failures or our successes) nor were we born to be defined by how people define us. God is the giver of life and since He is, it is God who adds the definition to our life. God brings true purpose and true meaning to why He birthed life in us.

Our main text comes from the book of Jeremiah chapter one. Here, the Lord introduces himself to the prophet letting him know that God knew him and had purposed his life before he even formed Jeremiah in the belly of his mother. God further tells Jeremiah that he sanctified him (set him apart for God’s purpose) before Jeremiah came forth from his mother’s womb and ordained him a prophet unto the nations.

If we continue reading a few verses more, we see Jeremiah’s response to God’s call saying that he cannot speak because he is just a child. Jeremiah was a young 21 year old man when the Lord began to manifest his purpose in the Prophet’s life. When we tap into God’s plan for our life and begin to live out our God-ordained purpose, God will be the active force in our life causing us to go forth in the purpose and power of God. The apostle Paul understood this when he wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:14 telling us how God always causes us to triumph in Christ and manifests the knowledge of the savior through us in every place. Paul knew that when we begin to live out the purpose of God in us, we will always with God’s help live victoriously and through our victorious living thereby manifest the knowledge of Christ in triumph.

Our Study

Since you and I were created on purpose for purpose, we must submit ourselves unto God abiding in Him until His will (purpose) is revealed in us. There’s a gospel song entitled “Stand Still (Until His Will Is Clear) the lyrics of which says “What do I do, when I don’t know what to do; What do I say, when I don’t know what to say; Where do I turn, what are the answers to those questions that seem to have no answers?” The song says “I’ll stand still...until...your will is clear to me. I’ll just stand still until you fill in the missing pieces. For you and I to come to the knowledge of what our life purpose is, we must seek the face of God and then simply stand still in God until God makes his purpose clear.

By purpose, what do we mean? The verbal root of the Hebrew word for purpose means to give counsel, be deliberate or to determine. When God purposes, He gives counsel in how He deliberately determines our course. God's plans for us stand firm forever (*cf.*, *Psalm 33:11*); His purpose will stand (*cf.*, *Isaiah 46:10*). What God intends, what he has in mind, what He purposes and plans, what He pleases, these together give the basis for a theology (a study of who God is in all his attributes). As you and I tap into God's plan for our life our living will be on purpose. So in plain and simple language, the work is not trying to figure out how to live with or on purpose. Purpose driven living is the by-product of one tapping into God's plan for their living.

How Do I Tap Into God's Plan?

Step One: Praying Unto God

Matthew 7:7-8 (KJV)

7. *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*
8. *For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

God is more than willing to show us His will and plan for our lives, but He also wants us to show that we want to know it and follow it. He wants us to make an effort – to seek His will. Then He has promised that we will find it. So if you are asking and seeking and knocking then you can rest assured that He will show you His will for your life. God's will may not always be what we expect, and it can be revealed to us in unexpected ways, but if we are truly interested, we will find it.

God loves to do astounding things. Most of the time, they are in response to the prayers of His people. So, asking and seeking God through prayer is not only a good place to start in tapping into God's plan for us, it is the only place to start. After all, God has a blueprint plan of our lives, written in the palm of His hand (*cf.* *Isaiah 49:16*). The Bible says we do not have because we do not ask. Therefore, if we don't know God's plan and direction for our life, we simply ought to try asking and seeking Him for guidance.

Jeremiah 33:2-3 (NLT)

2. *This is what the Lord says—the Lord who made the earth, who formed and established it, whose name is the Lord:*
3. *Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come.*

When the Lord spoke these words to the prophet Jeremiah, Jeremiah was confined in the court of the prison because of his faithfulness unto the Lord. Jeremiah faithfully exercised his prophetic office being obedient to speak what thus says the Lord despite the people's rejection of his message. The message God called Jeremiah to deliver was one of judgment upon the people of Judah because of their rebellion toward their God.

As forestated, sometimes God's purpose for our life takes us into unpopular and quite difficult territory. While the Bible directs that "men ought to always pray and not to faint" (*cf.*, *Luke 18:1*), it is when God's plan leads us into these places that prayer must be made without ceasing. It is in these times that we need God to make clear what we are to do; revealing His remarkable secrets about things to come to past that we otherwise would not know.

1 John 5:14-15 (NKJV)

14. *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*
15. *And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

The apostle John lets us know that when we approach God in prayer, we must do so with full assurance and confidence. Our confidence is never in ourselves, but rather in Christ. What we bring to the prayer closet is our faith. By faith we believe, based on the confidence of Christ, that whatever we pray according to God's will, God has promised to hear us and answer our petitions. This takes me to the scripture that speak of how an effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. When we pray with assurance that God hears us and that He is able to do exceedingly above even what we are thinking and asking in our prayers, God will always come through.

There are so many more Biblical scripture references that speak to us of the knowledge of God bringing forth the will of God alive in our life. We have only addressed a few here. The one thing to take with us as we seek the Lord for His plan and will in our life is that "prayer is simply talking to God—and the most important thing we can say about this is that God wants us to talk to Him.

Step Two: Surrendering Completely to God

Matthew 16:24-26 (MSG)

Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is not help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?"

Wow...the Message Bible puts this passage in eye-opening context. The only way to tap into God's plan for our life is through total and complete surrender. When we try to live on our own (self-help), we are only beating air. We are not going anywhere near the direction of finding God's purpose for our living.

The word "surrender" is a battle term. It implies giving up all rights to the conqueror. When one army surrenders to another, they lay down their weapons or arms and the conqueror takes all control. Surrendering completely to God works in like manner. To bring God's plan for our life to fruition, we must set aside our own plans and eagerly seek His plans. The blessing is that God's plan for us is always in our best interest unlike our own plans which often lead to our self-initiated destruction which finds its end result leading to eternal death.

Proverbs 14:12 (NKJV)

There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

A part from God's plan, we are left to live our own misguided and often time distorted view of life. We are forced to live a life driven by the desires or appetite or as the Bible calls it "works" of the flesh that is continually at war with the Spirit. Though we no good, how or the means to do good we find not the answers to. Our flesh dominates us on every front keeping us from working out what God desires for our life.

Galatians 5:17-24 (NKJV)

17. *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*
18. *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*
19. *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,*
20. *idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outburst of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,*
21. *envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in times past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God*
22. *But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
23. *gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*
24. *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

As we surrender ourselves unto God completely holding back nothing of ourselves, we will gain victory over the works of the flesh. Romans 8:13 tell us that we are to mortify the deed of the body (flesh) so that we may live and by living, live the life God has planned.

Colossians 3:1-2 (MSG)

1. *So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, act like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective.*

Here again, the Message Bible puts things in right perspective. If we mean to tap into God's plan for our life and live with purpose on purpose, we must act like it. We must live the life of the surrendered pursuing the things of God made possible through the work of Christ. We cannot let what we are going through or what we are experiencing, no matter how difficult it may seem, cause us to take our eyes off of what's important. Living effectively surrendered comes through a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

Romans 6:13-14 (MSG)

13. *That means you not give sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives. Don't give it the time of day. Don't even run little errands that are connected with that old way of life. Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full-time—remember, you've been raised from the dead!—into God's way of doing things. Sin can't tell you how to live. After all, you're not living under that old tyranny any longer. You're living in the freedom of God.*

Here the apostle Paul supports the surrendered life telling us that God demands that we surrender the totality of our selves. God wants the whole of who we are. Rather than offering any part of ourselves to sin as an instrument of doing what is outside of God, we must offer ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and offer every part of ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness. Like prayer unto God, surrendering completely unto God is a critical key to us tapping into God's plan and thus living on purpose.

Step Three: Resolved to Accept God's Will

Matthew 26:39 (NLT)

He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

While we have established the necessity of prayer and complete surrender unto God as part of tapping into God's plan and living purposefully, just as key is our willingness or resolve to accept God's will whatever it is. We are not in any way going to attempt to suggest that accepting God's will is easy like a walk in the park. See, God's will sometimes leads us into unpleasant and perhaps hurtful situations. If we would be human about it, no one seeks to experience pain and hurt. However, when we come to embrace the truth that God is in control and not man, it can soften the blow our unpleasant, hurtful and difficult experiences brings our way.

Psalm 113:5-7 (MSG)

God is higher than anything and anyone, outshining everything you can see in the skies. Who can compare with God, our God, so majestically enthroned, surveying his magnificent heavens and earth? He picks up the poor from out of the dirt, rescues the wretched who've been thrown out with the trash.

At times the Lord allows kinks in our plans to remind us that we aren't in control. It can upset our world when friends no longer want to be around us, spouses want divorce, children become prodigals, or our jobs are becoming unbearable to perform. It's easy to look at people and accuse them of messing with our agendas. However, perhaps God is allowing difficulty to get our attention of His master hand at work. In the final analyses, we must agree that God is in control and not man.

Even if/when we don't understand God's will, we need to respond to His direction. In fact, when we don't understand God's will, it is even more important to do exactly what He directs us to do. Often, God asks us to make the choice to do His will before we know the specific details of his will. That's because part of God's plan is to develop in us a trust of His character and of His benevolence.

Unfortunately, this is where many of us get into battle of wills with God, wanting him to reveal His plan to us first and only then will we decide whether or not to do what He tells us to do. But that's not the way it works. God want us to decide in advance, trusting Him and believing that His will is the best plan for our life, believing that He will strengthen us to do all that He asks us to do.

One reason God doesn't give us the full picture of His plans for our life is that we may be overwhelmed by what we see. For instance, it may seem impossible for us to complete everything God plans for us during this season. But that's the point—there's no way we can fulfill God's plan for us without God empowering us to do so. This is where we must move in faith and belief.

Romans 8:28 (NLT)

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Without doubt this must be our ultimate belief. Whatever God has willed for our life will work together for our good because we love Him and have been called on purpose for His purpose.

Jeremiah 29:11 (MSG)

I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.

What comfort and consolation God gives us through the prophet Jeremiah. What God is up to in our life, if only we seek to accept His will, will lead us into the future life with God we hope for. God will complete

whatever He wills in our life. He only asks that we trust and accept what He is doing; it's all leading to a good and expected end.

Conclusion

Before God even planned the world, He planned you and I. Ephesians 1:4 tells us *“Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes”*. When God planned our existence in the earth, He planned our purpose. God told the prophet Jeremiah and He's telling you and I *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”* (Jeremiah 1:5). In other words, you were placed in your mother's womb because you were in the mind of God. Your life here is not a mistake; your life here is on purpose and for purpose.

Life is a journey; we are all travelling inevitably towards the end of the journey. We will either coast through life with no sense of direction or we will live a life of purpose and fulfillment. Take to heart that everyone's life is driven by something, whether that something is bad leading to a senseless life or whether that something is good leading us to a fulfillment of God's created purpose in our life. God desires that you and I be purpose driven people, driven by His plan, His purpose for our lives. And that my brother and my sister is where true meaning and significance of life comes from.

God's peace and blessing be upon you....

Scripture quotation marked (NKJV) are taken from the New King James Version[®]. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotation marked (NLT) are taken from the New Living Translation. Copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotation marked (MSG) are taken from The Message. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2001. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotation marked (KJV) are taken from the King James Version and are used by permission. Copyright notice not required.