

## Living a life of purpose

According to Ripley's Believe it or Not, the oldest known bird was called the Archaeopteryx. According to scientists, this ancient bird was so clumsy it could not control its own flight. It simply flew into the air and went wherever the wind blew it. Many Christians are that way. They have no sense of direction and purpose. Because of that, they go where the wind blows them. Michael Shannon

Aimlessness is akin to lifelessness. Dead leaves in the back yard may move around more than anything else — more than the dog, more than the children. The wind blows this way, they go this way. The wind blows that way, they go that way. They tumble, they bounce, they skip, they press against a fence, but they have no aim whatsoever. They are full of motion and empty of life. God did not create humans in his image to be aimless, like lifeless leaves blown around in the backyard of life. He created us to be purposeful — to have a focus and an aim for all our days. What is yours today? What is yours for the new year? John Piper

Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

### 1) Created and called for a purpose

- We were primarily created to glorify God
  - Isaiah 43:6-7 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth — everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.
- Having been created for the glory of God, God needs to be the primary focus of everything in our lives – He is the central hub around which our lives revolve, in whom we find our ultimate satisfaction, and who we strive to please in all we are, do, and say.
  - John Piper: God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.
  - When we are fully satisfied in Him, we won't seek satisfaction elsewhere
- However, God is not only glorified in us finding our satisfaction in Him, but also in the works that He purposed for us to do
  - Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
  - Matthew 21:28-31 "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'  
"I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.  
"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.  
"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"  
"The first," they answered.
  - We can say we love God, say that we will do whatever He wants us to do, but it's not what we say that please and glorifies Him; it's what we do
- It is in the bearing of fruit in and for the kingdom of God that we glorify God
  - John 15:8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.
- This fruit is twofold:
  - It's the fruit of a changed life being changed into the image of Jesus reflecting the fruit of the Spirit.
  - It's the fruit of accomplishing the tasks that He has given us to do
- Jesus lived His whole life on earth for the purposes of God and strove to accomplish His specific God-given purpose for life on earth
- Jesus purposed to glorify the Father
  - John 17:1 Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.
- Jesus glorified the Father by accomplishing the work that He was sent to do
  - John 17:4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

## 2) Finding your purpose

- If we are going to glorify God in our lives by fulfilling His good purpose for us, we need to know what that purpose is
- Jesus knew what His purpose on earth was from the beginning, and that was to die on the cross for the sins of mankind
  - Matthew 20:28 The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
  - John 12:27-28 Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"
- Jesus had this purpose as His focus of vision and life and lived solely to this end.
  - His fruitfulness in life, and ultimately in death, was due to Him knowing and living according to His God given purpose.
  - His sub-purposes – preaching, teaching, healing the sick, making disciples – were all in line with His ultimate purpose of dying for the sins of mankind.
- In the same way God has given us all a particular purpose in life that He wants us to accomplish in order to bring glory to Him.
  - Knowing our purpose gives us direction in life
  - Fulfilling our particular purposes makes us to be a blessing to others

## 3) Living a life of purpose

- Philippians 2:13 It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.
- Fulfilling our life's purpose is a work of God in and through us giving us the vision, desire, and ability to fulfil it
  - Let us not confuse our natural purpose of self-ambition with the Lord's purpose for us?
  - James 4:13-15 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."
- God has given us gifts to accomplish His purposes for each of us.
  - Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.
- What is your purpose in life?
  - What is your vision for this year? What does God want you to accomplish for His glory?
  - Does He want you to get involved in a particular ministry, or even start a new one?