

“God Has a Purpose for Your Life”

Text: Ephesians 1:11; Colossians 1:16

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

Oakland, California

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I want to start off this fall reminding us of God’s plan and purposes for our lives. We say in our vision statement that PBPC is “where lives change for God.” Our purpose as a church family is to produce followers of Jesus Christ. Where do these two statements come from? How do they help me accomplish God’s purpose for my life? What is my purpose in life?

- Do you think that the people along the Gulf Coast are asking the question, “What is my purpose in life?”
- Do you know people in the Bay Area who are asking, “What is my purpose in life?” How about the people in Oakland whose lives are being devastated by senseless violence, loss of jobs or foreclosures? There may be even people here today who are asking this important question.

How do we know what our purpose is in life is? We know our purpose comes from God’s Word, and with God’s help we can fulfill God’s plan and purpose for our lives individually, and His church.

God never created anything without a purpose: plants, animals, humans. The fact that you are alive means God has a purpose for your life!

If you want to know the purpose of your life, you must begin with God first and foremost! It’s not about you!

- You were made BY GOD & FOR GOD, and until you understand that truth, you will not understand the purpose for your life.

Read Ephesians 1:11, *“It is in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for ...part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.”*

Colossians 1:16, *“Everything, absolutely everything... got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him.”* Who’s Him? Jesus Christ!

PRAY!

We need to get this:

- You were made to last forever.
- Life is a preparation for eternity. This life is a warm-up act; a dress rehearsal for eternity.

Keeping that in mind, this morning let's look at God's five purposes for your life and for His church.

I. GOD PLANNED ME FOR HIS PLEASURE!

- A. Revelation 4:11, *"You, God, created everything and it is for Your pleasure that they exist and were created!"*
- B. Ephesians 1:4, *"Long before He laid down earth's foundations, God had us in mind, and settled on us as the focus of His love."*
 1. The Bible says, "God is love." You were created to be loved by God!
 2. God didn't need you, but He made you to love you!
 3. God wants you to know Him and love Him back!
 - Unlike animals, people are made in God's image—we have been given the capacity to have a relationship with God. This is the privilege of being a human.
- C. What is the greatest command of God? Mark 12:29-30, Jesus said, *"The most important one is this: ... 'Love the Lord your God with all our heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"*
- D. Hosea 6:6, *"I don't want your sacrifices – I want your love! I don't want your offerings – I want you to know Me!"*
 1. Why did God say this?
 2. "Love God" and "know God" = the 1st purpose of your life. The most important thing you can know in life is that God loves you! The most important thing you can do in life is to love Him back.
 - Every morning kneel: "God, if I don't get anything else done today, I want to love you."
 - If you do this, you'll fulfill your primary purpose. If you don't...tragic failure!
- E. **The First Purpose of Life Is to Know and Love God.**
 1. We call this worship. The #1 thing you will do in heaven is worship! PRACTICE!
 2. Worship is more than what we do on Sunday mornings. It's more than music, the message and prayers. Romans 12:1 tells us that worship is an on-going relationship with God, a lifestyle; it's 24/7 (work, family, neighbors, friends).
 3. Every one of us needs to be in a love relationship with God—word & prayer. Listen to God through His word, the Bible, and talk to God through prayer.

II. GOD FORMED ME FOR HIS FAMILY.

- A. Ephesians 1:5, *“God’s unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure.”*
1. God wanted a family and you were created to be a part of it.
 2. Your spiritual family will outlast your physical family! It’s eternal.
 3. Listen: The kind of life God intends: Not just a matter of believing! – BELONGING.
- B. We were never meant to go through life alone! So God created a spiritual family. 1 Peter 1:3, *“God has given us the privilege of being born again so that we are now members of God’s own family.”*
- C. What is God’s family? 1 Timothy 3:15, *“The family is the church of the living God, the support and foundation of the truth.”*
1. We are a family, not an institution. The family of God is the support and foundation of the truth. What happens when a building has no foundation? It collapses.
 2. God says: The purpose of your life collapses without a Church family. You need spiritual support.
 - Excuse: “I don’t need the church to love God.” But you can’t learn to love others by yourself.
- D. Two things you’ll do in heaven: Love God. Love His family.
1. On earth we are to practice loving God’s family. 1 Peter 2:17: *“Love your spiritual family.”* This is why you need a specific church home. The local church is the lab for learning real love.
- E. The Second Purpose of Life Is to Learn to Love Others.**
The Bible calls this fellowship. Jesus tells us that one of the keys to fellowship is baptism, where you are initiated into the family of God. Have you been baptized? Mark it on the Connection Card.

III. GOD CREATED ME TO BECOME LIKE CHRIST.

- A. Romans 8:29, *“From the very beginning God decided that those who came to Him – and all along He knew who would – should become like His Son.”* Once you understand this, life will make a lot more sense!
- B. Colossians 1:15, *“We look at the Son and see God’s original purpose in everything created.”* This is not Plan B! It’s been God’s purpose from the very beginning. *“Let us make a person...”* Not a god, but godly!
- C. God is more interested in who you are than what you do because you’re not taking your career into eternity! But - character!
- D. Philippians 2:5, *“In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.”* We often ask, “Why is this happening to me?” To make me like Christ! Every problem has a purpose. Becoming like Christ is a lifelong journey, a process! God calls this discipleship.
- E. How does God make us more and more like Jesus? Through TRUTH (God’s word), TRIALS, TEMPTATIONS...PEOPLE!

F. What is Jesus like? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – the Fruit of the Spirit. How does God grow the Fruit in our lives? By putting us in the exact opposite situation! You can grow from any situation with the right attitude.

G. The 3rd Purpose of Life is to Grow Up Spiritually

Spiritual growth will come from joining a Life Group (small group). The curriculum I've encouraged all our Life Groups to study this next year is "Experiencing Christ Together" where you can build God's purposes in your lives. Sign-ups at the tables.

IV. GOD "SHAPED" ME TO SERVE HIM.

- A. Psalm 139:13, "*You shaped me first inside, then out; You formed me in my mother's womb.*" God uniquely shaped you in a certain way to make a certain contribution with your life.
- Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences
- B. Ephesians 2:10, "*God made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us to do good works, which He planned in advance for us to live our lives doing.*" Another name for good works is service/ministry. You were created for ministry. What is a ministry? "*Loving your neighbor as yourself.*" Anytime you use your talents to help others.
- C. **4th Purpose of Life Is to Serve God by Serving Others.**
1. Are you serving God by serving others through ministry?
 2. I'll be preaching on this later this year. CLASS 301 is about your SHAPE and I'll be offering that the first part of 2009.
- D. Many misunderstand heaven—we're not going to sit around playing a harp on some fluffy cloud. You'll serve God in eternity. Practice now!

V. GOD MADE ME FOR A MISSION

- A. Jesus praying to the Father in John 17:8 says, "*In the same way that You gave Me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world.*"
1. "In the world" – You need a ministry *in the church* & a mission *in the world!*
- B. Acts 20:24, "*The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work that the Lord Jesus gave me – to tell people the Good News about God's grace.*"
- C. **The 5th Purpose of Life is to Share the Good News.**
1. Acts 1:8, "*You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*"
 2. The Bible says that once I know the Good News about God's love and forgiveness and God's purposes for my life, God wants me to pass it on, sharing the good news with others.

- D. How do we learn how to do this? Two weeks from today, September 21st, Rhonda Hastings will be our guest speaker and she will be talking to us about "Random Acts of Kindness". This approach is a great first step in our growing in this important purpose that God has given us to live out. Rhonda will be speaking during the service, at a lunch after the service and then to the officers of the church and Life Group leaders. I want to strongly encourage you to be here. You will be blessed.

I invite you to close your eyes and picture a church family that is committed to these five purposes that God has given us to do. What I hope you see is a church family where lives change for Good, producing followers of Jesus Christ. This is our future and the future is today. This is God's plan for PBPC.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for creating me and loving me. I want to fulfill the purposes for which you created me. So starting today, I really want to get to know and love You. I want my life to bring You pleasure, and I want to become a part of Your family. Help me to grow more like Your Son, Jesus, and to use my life to follow and serve You. Equip me to complete my mission of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.