

PURPOSE: DOES MY LIFE REALLY MATTER?

SERIES REVIEW

Week 1: Psalm 1 — There are two paths. Following Jesus means choosing His way.

Week 2: If you follow Jesus, He leads you into relationships. “It is not good for man to be alone.” When we come to Christ, we enter His family; we enter His church.

We choose community over independence.

Week 3: If you follow Jesus, He doesn’t just lead you into relationship. **He leads you into purpose.**

You cannot follow Jesus without eventually discovering that **your life is about more than you.**

The order matters. I’m convinced you’ll never fully discover your purpose unless you’re in the family of God bc that’s how He’s designed it to work and I think you’ll see why today. Your first calling is to Jesus, to follow Him, then to be a part of His family, then to begin living a life of purpose.

INTRO — DOES MY LIFE REALLY MATTER?

Everybody wants to know:

Does my life matter?

Why am I here?

What am I supposed to do with my life?

Am I making a difference?

We tend to think about purpose primarily in terms of **calling**:

What job should I have?

Who should I marry?

Where should I live?

What am I called to do?

But Scripture actually answers a bigger question before it answers any of those questions.

General purpose versus specific purpose.

Before God gives you a specific **calling**, He gives humanity a **purpose**.

And to understand it, we have to go all the way back to the beginning.

Great commission - creation mandate

GENESIS 1:26–28

“Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us...’”

“So God created human beings in his own image...”

“Then God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it...’”

This is before Abraham.

Before Israel.

Before the church.

Before pastors.

Before the Great Commission.

This is God’s original purpose for humanity.

We are made in His image.

We are told to fill the earth.

We are told to subdue it.

And I think you can summarize that purpose in three words:

REFLECT. CULTIVATE. MULTIPLY.

BIG IDEA

God created me to reflect who He is, cultivate what He gives me, and multiply it into the lives of others.

1. REFLECT HIM

DEFINE

Before God tells Adam and Eve what to **do**, He tells them who they **are**.

“Let us make human beings in our image.”

That’s significant.

Because we tend to begin conversations about purpose with:

“What am I supposed to do?”

God begins with:

“Who did I create you to be?”

You were created in the image of God.

You were created to know Him.

To enjoy Him.

To represent Him.

To reflect His character into His world.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism says:

“Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

So my purpose doesn't begin with my career.

It doesn't begin with my gifting.

It doesn't even begin with my calling.

My purpose begins with God.

ILLUSTRATE

[PERSONAL STORY OPTION]

Nursing story - do I regret it question.

OR:

Use a simple image: **The moon doesn't generate light; it reflects light.** Its purpose isn't to draw attention to itself but to reflect the light of something greater.

Even Jesus - only what the father says or does. Philippians 2.

We were created to reflect God into His world.

ARGUE

Then Jesus comes along and says:

Matthew 4:19 — “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”

Notice the order:

Follow Me → I will make you.

We spend enormous amounts of energy trying to figure out what we're supposed to become.

Jesus says:

Follow Me. I'll handle the becoming.

And this is what sin distorted.

Instead of living a simple life following Jesus lead, we're trying to figure it all out on our own and carrying all the weight and responsibility that comes with that. And it's too much.

Instead of reflecting God, we started reflecting ourselves.

Instead of building His Kingdom, we started building ours. Then we have to maintain it and it's exhausting. It's not how we were meant to go about this.

Proverbs 16:9

Jesus restores us to our original purpose.

APPLY

So if you're trying to discover your purpose, don't start with:

"God, what am I supposed to do?"

Start with:

"Jesus, who are You making me?"

Follow Jesus.

Your purpose begins with Him.

2. CULTIVATE IT

DEFINE

God says:

"Fill the earth and subdue it."

Genesis 2 gives us a picture of what that means.

God places Adam in the garden:

"to tend and watch over it."

God creates something good and then gives humanity responsibility for it.

In other words:

“Here’s what I’ve created. Now do something with it.”

Cultivate it.

Develop it.

Organize it.

Protect it.

Build something.

Make something.

Help something flourish.

God didn’t create Adam simply to **exist in the garden**.

God gave Adam something to **do with the garden**.

Purpose means taking what God has put in my hands and faithfully doing something with it.

ILLUSTRATE

[ILLUSTRATION OPTION]

First opportunity to preach - wasn’t trying to become the lead pastor. I just said yes to the opportunities that presented themselves.

Leading worship, leading college team, pastoring college, trying creative, leading production, campus pastor, ministry pastor, executive pastor.

Each step God preparing me, shaping me for the next. I just was trying to grow and to be faithful in each step - to cultivate the gifts and opportunities God was giving me.

Today! Be ready in season and out of season 2 Timothy 4.

OR use the garden itself:

A garden has enormous potential, but it doesn’t cultivate itself.

Someone has to plant.

Someone has to prune.

Someone has to pull weeds.

Someone has to water.

Someone has to tend it.

Encouragement - older gentleman last night. So many of you. Encouragement is about being willing to cultivate others, not just being focused on ourselves. It's powerful!!

If you're not dead, you're not done yet.

God gives potential. We participate through cultivation. Our own gifts and resources and those of the people around us.

ARGUE

Jesus says in **Luke 16:10**:

"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones."

Look at the pattern throughout Scripture.

Joseph receives a dream about leadership.

But first he learns faithfulness in Potiphar's house and then in prison.

David is anointed king.

Then he goes back to watching sheep.

Moses will lead a nation.

But first he spends forty years in the wilderness.

God often prepares us for tomorrow through our faithfulness today.

This also means purpose is much bigger than "ministry."

A teacher can cultivate.

A business owner can cultivate.

A stay-at-home parent can cultivate.

A doctor can cultivate.

A plumber can cultivate.

An artist can cultivate.

A student can cultivate.

Any place where you take something God has entrusted to you and help it flourish can become an expression of your God-given purpose.

APPLY

So maybe the question isn't:

"God, what big thing am I supposed to do with my life?"

Maybe it's:

"God, what have You already put in my hands?"

Your marriage.

Your children.

Your job.

Your friendships.

Your neighborhood.

Your resources.

Your influence.

Your gifts.

Your opportunities.

Cultivate it.

Don't become so obsessed with what God might give you someday that you miss what He's already given you today.

Be faithful with what's in your hands.

3. MULTIPLY IT

DEFINE

God says:

“Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth.”

God doesn't simply want His image represented in one garden.

He wants His image to fill the earth.

And when we get to Jesus, we hear something that sounds remarkably similar.

Matthew 28:19

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations...”

Genesis:

Fill the earth.

Jesus:

Go to all the nations.

The mission has always been bigger than me.

God's desire is to fill His world with people who know Him, reflect Him and live under His rule.

So whatever God puts in me isn't supposed to stop with me.

God blesses me so that His blessing can flow through me.

ILLUSTRATE

[PERSONAL STORY OPTION]

Mike Z last night.

A pastor.

A mentor.

A parent.

A leader.

Someone who saw something in you, taught you something, gave you an opportunity, or helped form you.

Dr Bennett to Allen to me

Then:

“What they put in me didn’t stop with me.”

Noah’s baptism

7 days w my kids

OR:

Use parenting as a general illustration rather than a personal story.

Parents aren’t merely trying to raise good children.

They’re forming people who will eventually carry something into another generation.

That’s also why we must start with reflect and cultivate, because whatever you reflect is what you’ll multiply.

That’s multiplication.

ARGUE

This is why **Ephesians 4:11–12** says pastors and teachers are given to:

“equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church.”

My job as a pastor isn’t to do the ministry while everybody else watches.

My job is to equip you to do ministry.

Because God has put His Spirit in you.

God has given gifts to you.

God has placed you in places I will never go.

You know people I will never meet.

You have influence I will never have.

You can build things I could never build.

You carry the image of God into places I will never go.

That's multiplication.

APPLY

This is where your individual calling begins to come into focus.

You don't have to panic trying to find the **one thing** God created you to do.

Instead, pay attention. Start with a collective purpose and over time your individual role will get clearer. Ask, how can I serve someone else's vision? Then:

What breaks your heart?

That may tell you something about your **passion**.

What gives you energy?

That may tell you something about your **gifting**.

What do other people consistently affirm in you?

That may tell you something about where you're **effective**.

What opportunities has God already put in front of you?

That may tell you something about your **next step**.

You don't need the next thirty years figured out.

You need to be faithful with the next step.

CONCLUSION — PURPOSE BEFORE CALLING

Here's what I want you to remember:

You don't have to discover your calling before you can start living your purpose.

Calling may take years to come into focus.

Your career may change.

Your role may change.

Your season may change.

Your assignment may change.

Your purpose doesn't.

Genesis gives it to us from the beginning.

REFLECT HIM.

Who am I becoming?

Am I becoming more like Jesus?

CULTIVATE IT.

What's in my hands?

What has God already entrusted to me that I can help flourish?

MULTIPLY IT.

Who am I pouring into?

Where is what God has put in me flowing out to someone else?

DOES MY LIFE REALLY MATTER?

Yes.

Not because everybody will know your name.

Not because you're going to stand on a platform.

Not because you're going to accomplish something enormous.

Your life matters because you bear the image of God and God has given you a part to play in His world.

So tomorrow morning:

Reflect Him.

Wherever He puts you:

Cultivate it.

Whatever He puts in you:

Multiply it.

REFLECT. CULTIVATE. MULTIPLY.

God created me to reflect who He is, cultivate what He gives me, and multiply it into the lives of others.

NEXT STEP

Maybe you don't need to figure out God's ten-year plan today.

Maybe you just need to take the next faithful step.

Follow Jesus.

Go through Core.

Join a Small Group.

Get on a Serve Team.

Invest in someone.

Use your gifts.

Be faithful with what God has already put in your hands.

You don't have to know your entire calling to start living your purpose.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism says:

“Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

Calling is primarily used to refer to salvation - to a relationship.