

God has made everything for the purpose of His glory. God's glory is not only displayed in His power, wisdom, and dominion, but also in His love and goodness toward everything He has made. Our glory and God's glory are not at cross purposes, but instead we find that as we humble ourselves and pursue His glory, we are glorified as well. In fact, there is no better thing we can do for ourselves than to pursue the glory of God by laying down our lives and taking up our crosses. In the next week, we will work on finding God's purpose in our lives, or seen from a different perspective, fitting into God's plan for creation.

Day 1

Reconciliation & Discipleship

Many times people ask me how to find their purpose in life, as if there is a specific, personalized plan for them that is in all ways different from everyone else's. Because we all fall into the category of human being, most of the plan for our lives will resemble the plan for every other human being. Many people want to get to the specifics of their vocation or who they should marry before they get the general human being stuff nailed down, but this represents a great error, for the specific stuff cannot be discerned until the general stuff is settled. Have you been joyfully reconciled to God? Have you accepted your utter sinfulness and gloried joyfully in the mercy of salvation? If you have not, it will be hard to understand the greatness of the calling you will have in your life. Without a joyful transformation, you will still hold all the same values of the world, and will not know true riches when they are presented to you. Do you submit to God joyfully, or do you chafe under the weight of His direction in your life? You might find your calling but leave it because you fail to find happiness in serving where he has created you to serve. If God were to call you to the lowliest life you could think of, but you knew that others were being blessed through this humble life and God were being glorified, could you be happy in it or would you leave it soon after starting? Do not put your hand to the plow and look back. Are you growing joyfully in your faith and knowledge of our savior? How can you hope to know where and how you should live if you do not know the author of life? If you want to know and live your purpose, you must know and live according to the one who gives purpose.

Verses: Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 14:27, John 8:31-32

Prayer Topics: Aim, Direction, Humility

Day 2

Understand the Plan

If you have ever been chewing your food and suddenly bit your lip, you know the surprise and pain that accompanies this unwanted experience. You also know something else, something that haunts you as soon as the pain of the experience subsides. You know, without a doubt, it will happen again. Hopefully just once, but perhaps more. You live in fear and anxiety, knowing the pain of another accidental bite is just around the corner. While the first came out of the blue, like a bolt of lightning, the second is preceded by dreadful anticipation. Why does this happen? Because the first bite has created swelling that puts the area at odds with the proper masticating function of the mouth. In much the same way, many people try to live lives of purpose and meaning while being at odds with the purpose and meaning of the universe, and because they are at odds with the function of everything that has been created, they stick out and end up being hurt endlessly. I could not count the number of times I have been asked to pray for or bless someone who desperately wants relief from the consequences of their own actions, while never entertaining the idea of changing those actions whose consequences are both painful and predictable. The Logos of God means that everything has a purpose, a proper use, and therefore finds

its meaning in the fulfillment of that purpose and its pain in that purposes' frustration. In order to live a fulfilling and meaningful life, we must understand the plan of God for all creation and fit our lives into that plan. In order to do that, we must become students of the word, for there is no substitute for knowing the instructions.

Verses: Ephesians 4:11-17, Jeremiah 29:11, Proverbs 19:21

Prayer Topics: Trial, Error, Wisdom

Day 3

His glory or Yours?

In order to fit into the plan of God our goals must become God's glory, which seems obvious and trite to most people who have been Christians for any significant length of time. The problem is, this is much easier said than done and we can find ourselves drifting from the path in almost imperceptible ways. When I was a child, for example, I was often asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. I don't recall ever being asked what I thought God wanted me to be. And so, as I charted my vocational path, I was encouraged to think about what my interests were, what my skills were, and what kind of life I wanted. Did I want lots of money? Freedom and travel? Adventure or stability? I was never encouraged to think about God's plans for the world and what might need to be done to make that a reality. I was never encouraged to think of the needs of the world, where the world's condition differed from its destination in God's scheme, and where I might do something about that. And in most of life since, most people ask questions in a similar fashion. What are my retirement plans? Would I like to live where my kids live? What about an advanced degree? Most people, including most Christians, in both day-to-day decisions as well as in big picture questions, do not consider the glory of God. What do you feel like doing this evening after work? If you asked what would glorify God, would your life be worse or better? Would God put you to the grindstone, never allowing you a moments rest? Would you need to attend endless prayer meetings, or go to Africa against your will? Is God glorified in creating worn out, unhappy, un-interesting minions? Or, can God be trusted with your good? If I stop seeking my own glory, will my glory be lost or enhanced? Can I be glorified by seeking God's glory? It might be important to ask ourselves this question.

Verses: John 17:22, Psalm 3:3, 1 Corinthians 10:31

Prayer Topics: God's Plan, Will, Intent

Day 4

Growing Through Challenge

In trying to find our purpose within the Logos of God, we will face many challenges. No sooner do we accept the call to Logos with enthusiasm and Joy, then we find ourselves facing seemingly insurmountable challenges and obstacles. We will find that we lack wisdom, we lack skill, and we generally make a mess of all we do. I once knew of a couple of ministers right out of bible college who were going to set the world on fire for Christ, and within weeks they would have dozens within their congregation. They set off with great expectations, and when the world did not respond to their ministry with the enthusiasm they expected, they quit not only that ministry, but left full time ministry altogether. We should expect that our first efforts will be difficult and bear less fruit than we hoped for, but this must not discourage us from starting. Imagine a child who notices that everyone is walking around, and even one day sees gymnasts on television. Now imagine that child decides to start today learning to walk, and upon finding failure at his first attempt, gives up because he could not do a front

somersault straight away. The challenge of moving our body is enough to keep us busy our whole lives, and so is finding our purpose within the Logos of God. You will face challenges of many kinds, but do not lose heart. If we persevere we will be rewarded.

Verses: James 1:2-4, Proverbs 3:5-6, Philippians 4:6

Prayer Topics: Determination, Perseverance, Longevity

Day 5

Be Humble

In finding our purpose within the purpose of God for creation, it is very important to be humble. Humility is not putting yourself down, but rather finding your place in creation. C.S. Lewis once said that a man who was completely humble who had just designed the best bridge in the world would say that he had just designed the best bridge in the world. How can that be? Well, the truth is the truth even if you are humble. Humility sees the truth, and does not run from it or despair over it. Humility accepts the truth of our condition, our decisions, our creation, and gifting and accepts the position and work that comes with it, whether that be glory and celebration or repentance and renewal. Perhaps, in your older age, you realize you could have applied yourself more in your education, your career, or even in parenting. Humility accepts the truth of this, and because God is gracious, it does what it can now even as it knows there are consequences to these truths. It does not delude itself that the consequences don't exist, nor does it sink into the despair of inaction, but takes its proper place in creation and goes about its proper work with joy and hope. How much better is it to know the truth now while the sun still shines and work can still be engaged in? How good is it to see the path which must be taken than to remain ignorant of it until it is too late? Is God able to move mountains? Did Jesus feed the masses with a sack lunch? God can strike a mighty blow with a crooked stick, and he can take our feeble actions and bless them into something great, but we must have the humility to see ourselves clearly and understand our unique position to bring about what the Logos of God intends for His creation.

Verses: Psalm 149:4, Proverbs 18:12, James 4:10

Prayer Topics: Wisdom, Understanding, Truthfulness