



Part 2

Purpose Driven

Introduction

The next four lessons begin to explain *why* we do what we do as followers of Christ.

To be meaningful, things must be purposeful. And this is especially true of the Christian life because we believe that by becoming a Christian we are now connected to God who gives everything its meaning and purpose.

The Collins Dictionary defines *'purpose'* as: *'an object towards which one strives or for which something exists; an aim or goal; an intention, determination.'*

We now find our personal purpose within God's overall purpose for his people and the world. So, in these next four lessons we will explain what the 'big picture' is – God's overall purpose – and then look more closely at how serving that purpose gives our personal lives their focus and meaning.

The truth is that God's purpose 'drives' everything we do as Christians, it informs how we live every day, how we do church, raise our families, work, rest and play!

Our desire is to live a life driven by God's purpose for us. So read on...

Session 5 – God has a Purpose

Session 6 – A Purpose Driven Church: Our MISSION

Session 7 – A Purpose Driven Church: Our FELLOWSHIP

Session 8 – God's Purpose Shapes My Life

Session 5

God Has A Purpose

1. God's purpose for the world

God's purpose for the world has never changed. He created the world and the people in it to live in relationship and harmony with him. His intention was that the world would be filled with people like him (*'made in his image' Genesis 1:27*) and who choose to live in relationship with him because they *want* to, not because they *have* to. That's why he gave us a free will.

Sadly, the first people created made a bad choice; they used their free will to disobey God and sin. This plunged the world into serious problems because sin separates us from God.

For God's purpose to be achieved, the sin problem we are all now born with must be dealt with (*Psalms 51:5, Romans 3:23*). We cannot deal with it ourselves BUT God sent Jesus to deal with it for us – that's what the Cross is all about. The *'wages of sin are death'* (*Romans 6:23*) and Jesus received our wages for us. He got what we deserved; he died instead of us! (*See: 1 John 4:9-10 and 2 Corinthians 5:21*)

So, ***God's purpose*** to live in relationship and harmony with humankind ***is fulfilled every time someone becomes a Christian and begins living a life that pleases him.*** In so doing, they enter into a new relationship with their creator and contribute towards a global momentum that has as its ultimate aim the filling of the earth with people who love and glorify God.

Eventually, everything on earth and in heaven will be united under the headship of Christ. This can be a difficult concept to explain simply but the following verse best sums it up:

'And he made known to us the mystery of his will ... which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ' (Ephesians 1:9-10 NIV).

The Message translation puts it this way:

'Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth' (Ephesians 1:9-10 MSG).

You became part of that great plan when you became a Christian; you have made Jesus Lord of your life, your boss, your king, your head.

2. God's purpose for the church

If God's ultimate purpose is to unite all things under Christ's headship, all people must be made aware of two things:

- **first** that God exists and
- **second**, that he wants them to enter a personal relationship with him.

How will they ever know? Through various ways, but **two main ones**.

- a. Through the creation. The creation is part of God's revelation of himself to us (*See Psalm 19:1-4, Romans 1:20*). It prompts us to ask questions and draws us towards belief in a great and glorious creator God.
- b. Of greater importance to our subject in this session, God reveals himself to people through the **Church**:

'His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Ephesians 3:10-11).

As Christians live in united, thriving church communities, they become a living demonstration of how God wants people to live and the unity he wants them to live in. So, the Church has a great responsibility to outwork God's purpose as a sign to all unbelievers. People should look at the church and think: *'I want to be like those people.'*

God has chosen to express his awesome fullness through the Church (*See Ephesians 3:19*). We flesh out all that God is and bring his wisdom into the every sphere of life we touch. We are God's words, arms, legs, and attitudes; we are the Body of Christ.

In the scripture above, *'manifold'* means multi colored. The church is not meant to be a monotone, religious, traditional institution, it is meant to be exciting, full of life, a place where people can flourish and discover who they really are and what God has for their lives. The church is to be an expression of God's love for all men in a diverse, creative and 'multicolored' way. God wants us to live in unity but certainly not in uniformity! He loves diversity.

3. God's purpose for you and me

God's purpose for you and me is to play our part in making all we have said above happen. We do this through our unique gifts, abilities and personality, something we take a closer look at in Part 3 of this Discovery course.

But in this wider context, ***God's purpose for us individually is that we are used to help other men and women find their way into a relationship with God:***

*'All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **We are therefore Christ's ambassadors**, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God' (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).*

We are 'ministers of reconciliation', Christ's ambassadors.

- **Reconciliation** means: *to re-establish a close relationship; to become compatible*
- An **ambassador** is: *an authorized messenger or representative*

God's greater purpose is therefore dependant to a certain extent on the **Church** doing its job as the corporate expression of his life on earth, and each **individual** within the church truly living for God. The responsibility is great and we must not take it lightly. If people are to find God and their true purpose within his greater one, we must outwork the authority we have been given to be the messengers of God's love and hope in the world.

How we do this, is the subject of our next two sessions.