



Session 8

God's Purpose Shapes My Life

The way you live your Christian life is ultimately an issue of choice. God gave you a free will - the power to choose - and he wants you to choose to love him and live his way because you want to, not because you feel you have to out of duty or fear. This is a love relationship!

As we have been explaining in these lessons, ***the best choice you can make is to live in line with God's purpose.*** When we do, life is meaningful, our mission is focussed and our fellowship strong. The more we make this choice, the more the purpose of God will shape all we do – the whole of our lives. It becomes our aim to:

'... live a life worthy of the Lord and to please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God' (Colossians 1:10).

As we become more God centred and increasingly discover what God's specific purpose is for our family lives, work ethic, financial matters, use of our resources, and more, we make the choice to live that way and are blessed. This is purpose driven living! All we do lines up with God's purpose to fill this world with people like him!

Purpose driven choices

Let's look a little more closely at some of these practical choices we make to live in line with God's purpose.

Living a purpose driven life will influence your choices about:

1. The people you spend time with

The Bible says that *'a righteous man is cautious in friendship' (Proverbs 12:26)*. That's because the people we do life with have a great influence on us. So having chosen to follow Christ and live a God centred life, it is important that we have friends with similar aims and values.

Of course we all have – and need – a broad range of relationships to enjoy a happy and balanced life. But they must all be in the right spaces in our life. Relationships are ‘spatial’, that is to say we need the right people in the right spaces in our lives, especially those who are close to us. Your closest friends should be people who will encourage, correct and protect you. Spend your quality time with people of integrity and good character; people who are truly for you and who will provoke you to live out your God centred destiny.

Don’t be exclusive but be careful. Scripture teaches that you should, *‘not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good’ (Romans 12:21)*. So, do not let your non-Christian friends influence you to sin, you should be influencing them to be good!

Inevitably, in this process you will find that some friendships come to an end, you just grow out of them. But others will start. Make it a priority to develop new God centred, purpose driven friendships for this new season of your life.

Living a purpose driven life will also influence...

2. How you do your job

Becoming a Christian changes your attitude to work. The way we work is now part of our witness; it says something to others about our Christian beliefs. Also, God has a lot to say about our work ethic as Christians and how it can strengthen or weaken our fulfilment of his purpose. For example:

‘Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving’ (Colossians 3:23-24).

That means Jesus is your real boss! So we need to be responsible and work hard. In one sense our work becomes an act of worship; we should therefore work as if we are doing it for God.

Living a purpose driven life will also influence...

3. How you raise your family

Scripture has guidelines for mothers, fathers, children, husbands and wives. See for example *Ephesians 5:22-6:4*. It is good to discover what God’s will is for each status that affects you. So, Dads, find out what God says about being a good one! Etc. And as you outwork your family relationships and responsibilities keep in mind God’s promise that if you:

‘Train a child in the way he should go... when he is old he will not turn from it’ (Proverbs 22:6)

In the family we:

- ***Teach*** our children how to relate to God, authority figures and each other
- ***Learn*** consistency, self-discipline, practical skills, manners and good attitudes
- ***Model*** God's desire for well functioning families, the principles of which we carry into the wider church. Together the natural and spiritual family contribute to revealing God's better way of life to humanity.

Families are the building blocks of society. They are a God-given training ground for life. A God centred family life is therefore very important for your personal progress and is also part of your witness to the world around you.

Living a purpose driven life will also influence...

4. How you conduct your relationships

The Bible has a lot to teach us about the way we conduct our relationships. He wants our relationship with him to guide us in the way we relate to each other and the Bible gets very practical on this subject, For example:

*'But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving...
... For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light and find out what pleases the Lord' (Ephesians 5:1-10).*

The aim is to live a life that pleases God. So just as God has forgiven us, we should forgive those who offend us. Our heart should always be to live in peace with people, to restore broken relationships where we can and to relate appropriately to everyone. That can be a very difficult thing at times, and we will all make mistakes along the way. But gradually we will learn the skill of handling relationships in a godly way because we are committed to bringing our whole life into line with God's purpose.

Conclusion:

These last four lessons have explained that ***all we do relates to God's purpose***. God's purpose drives our personal and corporate lives as both individual Christians and as the Church family.

So now we move to the final part of this Discovery course and consider the truth that as a God centred, purpose driven Christian, God has empowered you to live life to the max!