

What's Your Purpose ? Prodigal Message #5

Memory Verse : Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Introduction:

Our true beliefs will determine what we do. Most of us have never thought about our Purpose in life. We ask you as a participant in Prodigal to think about the end of your life and what you want to be known for. We ask you to write down what a “win” in life would look like. Once you determine your purpose, you will have a rudder to guide not only your Prodigal journey, but a paradigm to guide every day decision making for the rest of your life. This ministry will suggest that a life purpose of “bringing glory to God above all else” will bring you ultimate reward and meaning. Such a purpose will aid in making prudent and wise decisions based on Biblical wisdom, which we believe is a paradigm of Truth that will reap joy now as well as eternal rewards.

*“A man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder – a waif, a nothing, a no man
“*

Thomas Carlyle

Prodigal participants want a Plan!

Everyone who comes to Prodigal wants a useful plan that will guide them to personal peace, family order, and their Prodigal's return. Most plans require objective boundaries and enforced consequences. The best plans are simple plans that can be followed clearly.

The reasons most plans fail are not the mechanics of the plan, but the inability of to carry them out. The only way that a plan will be successful is if you believe in it enough to follow it. You will believe in them only if you are sure without a doubt that they are rooted in truth and sound principles that will stand up under the heaviest of pressure.

You need faith in a Truth that will guide you consistently; a truth that you can live by and that can define your purpose in life. Your purpose then defines your Personal Mission Statement(PMS). Your PMS is then the written purpose statement that guides every decision you make in life. It defines why you get out of bed each day. It defines your relationships, your career choices, and your calendar. Your PMS, if followed, determines how you will spend your time and the choices you will make in the good times and the bad. It will determine your character and actions when no one is looking. It determines how you lead yourself and how you lead those around you.

Why Do Good Plans Fail?

We have an entire message on the “Plan” in weeks to come. It is important in this lesson to simply define what a successful plan is and how important a clearly defined purpose is in carrying out that plan successfully.

We must first define what a successful plan looks like. It is often a difficult paradigm shift for parents to understand that **the plan is for them** primarily, then only secondarily for the Prodigal. Make no mistake, we love and pray for your prodigal with you, but you cannot control how they respond to your plan. They are not here in this ministry with you. *A good plan restores order and peace to your life and your home, and provides an optimal recovery environment in which your prodigal stands the best chance to succeed.*

With that perspective in mind, we again ask the question of why plans fail. The answer is clear and simple, yet hard to hear. **Plans fail because of an incorrect view of God.** Let's revisit Tozer's famous quote that sums up this concept quite well.

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us...Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God. For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. " AW TOZER

Our faith rests solely on our sincere heartfelt belief of who God is and what He is like. **Lack of faith, caused by an incorrect view of God, leads to lack of faith in the plan itself.**

With that in mind, if we have a correct view of God with a steadfast faith then we should have a purpose for our life that is clearly defined and steadfast. If we are committed to that purpose, then our plan will be consistent with that purpose. In that paradigm, our plan is rooted in Truth. We are accordingly confident in that Truth and our plan has a high likelihood of success.

What is YOUR Purpose?

Have you thought about the meaning of life? Does your life have a clearly defined purpose? Why do you get out of bed in the morning? What would a win look like at the end of your day?

If you actually come up with the answers to those questions and you decide on your purpose, would those closest to you agree with your self-assessment? Does your purpose drive you? How does your calendar line up with your purpose? Are you spending your time, talent and treasure on things that align with your purpose? Where do you find the most satisfaction and reward in this life? These questions are not meant to intimidate you. It's just that the answers to these questions will help you determine what truly is your purpose.

It is fairly obvious what drives people, as it simply plays out in their character and the choices they make. We can tell if people are driven by fear, revenge, resentment, entitlement, people pleasing, or the like. We can tell if they put God first.

Ultimately, your view of God (faith) will be the overriding determinant of your purpose, and that purpose will determine your plan.

A Purpose Glorifying God

Ultimately, there are really only two over-arching choices of choosing how to live your life. **Life either revolves around you, or it revolves around God.** The following scriptures point clearly to what our purpose should be.

- Ephesians 1:11-12 (NIV) In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that **we**, who were the first to hope in Christ, **might be for the praise of His glory**
- 2 Timothy 1:9 God has saved me and called me with a **holy calling**, not according to my works, but according to **His one purpose** and grace
- Colossians 3:17 and whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Even if you claim to want to have your life be marked by serving others, if that service is not motivated by bringing God glory, then that service is at its core, “self – serving”. God tells us that He is actually the one that gave us those acts of service to do in the first place. (Eph 2:10) He tells us in Hebrews 12:1 that He has a race marked out specifically for us.

This ministry has unapologetically defined our guide book as the Bible, therefore we submit that ***our God centered purpose should be to put God firmly on the throne and to live fully for Him, trusting in Him and being obedient to His Word.***

God tells us through His Word that by trusting in Him alone and living for Him, we will be able to lead ourselves, our families, and those we impact well. We can have joy despite our circumstances knowing God cares for us right now in our struggles. He does not want us to grow weary and lose heart. (Matt 11:28, Heb 12:3) Following the one who has overcome the world will guide us through every storm of life by trusting in the Word of God HE has given us to direct our paths. (Prov 3:5,6) Such a purpose becomes an “eternal purpose”.

PARENTING with a Purpose to Glorify God

With this message’s principles in mind, it may be helpful to review how parenting with a clearly defined purpose to Glorify God might look.

Imagine for a moment if you were recently married and were wanting to start a family, when suddenly the Angel of the Lord appeared to you clearly like one of the Old Testament prophets.

The angel said, “***Your purpose is solely to bring God glory. The Lord has heard your prayer for children, so he will grant your wish. However you can bring him great glory by parenting well in remembering these precious gifts are not yours. They are His alone. As you have experienced trouble, so will they. Teach them my Word and model for them that they should lean not on their own understanding, but in all ways acknowledge me alone and I will direct their paths. Teach them that there security, trust and peace is found in me alone and all the alternatives lead to pain***

and death. Now peace be with you and God will see you at the judgement seat to review your performance.”

At the end of your life, imagine then sitting before the Creator of the Universe who gave you every good gift you ever received and you must give an account of how you used those gifts.

Finally the gift of your children comes up on the agenda and He gently unveils the truth that **your evaluation had nothing to do with the outcome of their lives** or even their stumbling along on a Prodigal journey that was devastating from an earthly perspective. He says, *“Your evaluation had nothing to do with the outcome of your Prodigal’s life or your child’s life. I was always the only one in charge of the outcome. I was only evaluating your love, obedience, and trust in me. Did you allow yourself to be trained by troubles and to be disciplined by me to grow deeper in love with me and to grow dependent on me alone. Did you ever come to realize that if everything else was stripped away, I alone was enough? “*

Purpose Beyond Prodigal

Isn’t it interesting that we don’t need a map when the end is clearly in view. We don't worry too much when the seas are calm and it is a bright sunny day and there is a gentle comforting breeze in our face. However, when the waves begin to rock you violently and you are uncertain if the boat you are in will withstand the forces hammering against the deck, you need to know the way to safety. You need to know confidently the path that will lead to safety and peace.

We may have been taught strategies to put into place when the storms come. We may have the best and most up to date maps and have talked to the most experienced navigators when we set out on a sailing trip. However, if we do not have confidence and faith in those strategies, fear will overcome us and we will lose our way. Our journey may even end in disaster. We often default to our human instincts and follow what seems right to us in the moment and trust in our own abilities. We forget that we are not in control and forsake our guidebook, our “eternal instruction manual”. As humans there are certain things that we cannot control. Our prodigal situation is one of them. Prov. 14:12 sums it up well. *“There are ways that seem right to a man, but in the end they lead to death.”*

The one thing we are promised in this life is trouble. The Prodigal journey you are on is just one such trouble. Jesus tells us himself in John 16:33, “in this world you will have trouble, but take heart for I have overcome the world” He graciously gives us both the bad news of trouble and the way out of it in one verse. He gives us the answer to what our true purpose should be about...Him!

Your Purpose Determines Your “Witness”

Furthermore, if your Purpose is to glorify God then you must be aware that everyone around you is watching. They will not follow fear and panic. They will follow someone confident and calm in the midst of the storm.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 *Blessed are those that **trust** in the Lord. They are like the trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not*

*bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they **go right on producing delicious fruit.***

If you are driven by security in money and possessions, the world will see it and you are apt to be destroyed when it is taken away. You will be unsettled and distracted when it is in jeopardy. Your mood will be determined by your bank account. If your worth and happiness is defined by your Prodigal's worldly success, your life will wax and wane with them.

As stated your purpose statement will ultimately be defined by your view of God. That purpose will ultimately define you. You may say what you think, but **you will only act on what you truly believe.** God has given us His plan for the world and for us individually. The question is if we believe enough to be obedient. Rick Warren has a great quote from his best selling book, *"The Purpose Driven Life"*. He gives this sobering and challenging statement. *"Understanding can wait, but obedience can't. God does not owe you an explanation. Partial obedience is disobedience."* The more fully you understand God, the greater chance you will have to be follow a God directed purpose statement in obedience.

We have emphasized in this lesson that our view of God is the most important thing about a man. The ministry will continue to point you to His Word and His people to help you shape your view of God, which will ultimately give you the purpose God intended for you.

If you ever come to believe with every fiber of your being that **He is good, He is the only one that is in control, He loves and cares for us, and that HE IS ENOUGH,** then you have not missed the opportunity that your prodigal journey has provided. The lessons you will have learned will have prepared you for the rest of your life. There will be no further trials that will undo you. **You will be a solid rock in any storm.** You will be able to live according to your God given purpose and will bring Him glory now. You will have joy in the midst of any circumstance despite inherent and unavoidable sadness, and you will enjoy eternity with God forever.

"God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him"

John Piper

Main Principles:

- **Once you determine your purpose, you will have a rudder to guide not only your Prodigal journey, but a paradigm to guide every day decision making for the rest of your life.**
- **Plans fail because of an incorrect view of God.**
- **It is often a difficult paradigm shift for parents to understand that the plan is for them primarily, then only secondarily for the Prodigal.**
- **When determining your purpose it will ultimately reflect if you feel life revolves around you or God.**
- **Our God centered purpose should be to put God firmly on the throne and to live fully for Him, trusting in Him and being obedient to His Word.**

- **Our parenting evaluation has nothing to do with the outcome of our children. Our evaluation is if we were obedient in following God's commands and letting God work in our Prodigals/children**
- **The Prodigal journey is an opportunity to learn that God is good, in control and enough, which is a paradigm that will allow you to bring Him glory for the rest of your life. You will be a solid rock in the midst of any storm**