

# A PURPOSE TO LIVE FOR

By

Curtis Dickinson

In a recent study of teenage pregnancy, it was reported that there are multiple reasons for it and no one solution. The report completely ignored the question of sin and the obvious solution: abstinence. As in other concerns, from economics to politics to war, little or no attention is given to the reality of a basic purpose for all human beings.

We have politicians who do not know the purpose of government, parents who do not know the purpose of bringing children into the world, and preachers who do not know the purpose of the gospel. Society is filled with people who are burdened with responsibilities and the necessity to fill their days with labor in order to make a living, but who have no idea of the purpose of life itself. The result is millions of apparently successful people who are failures at finding peace and satisfaction.

From creation to Christ's death and resurrection to final judgment, God acts with immutable purpose, but purpose is the essential ingredient lacking in today's world.

We are not the product of natural selection or evolution but are here because God created us, and whether we submit our lives to Him or live in rebellion, we belong to Him. Then the proper question is: What is God's purpose for man? For me? Since we are created for His purpose, only that which is directed to His purpose can ultimately be fulfilled.

The purpose of God is expressed in His own words at creation. "Let us make man in our own image" (Gen. 1:26). This doesn't mean that we are to be little gods, as some religions hold, nor does it mean that we were created with the attributes of God, such as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and eternity. Some think that since God is eternal, man in His image also must be eternal. But eternity means changelessness. God is changeless, but Adam certainly was not, and neither are any of us. The eternal quality is to be conferred at the resurrection and only to the redeemed.

To be in God's image means that man was created with intelligence with the power of reason, compassion, and self control. Other creatures were created to function by instinct, but man was given the ability to think rationally and originate his own course of action. Of all creatures, man alone was given commands upon which he could reflect and decide whether or not to obey.

Man's rebellion in the Garden of Eden was a denial of the Creator's purpose, a refusal to **be what God created him to be**. Today this rebellion impacts every facet of society. Creation itself is denied, and in the name of freedom, man refuses to acknowledge the existence of absolute morals. The result is a disintegrating society, run by criminals, and without direction. When man acts autonomously according to his own purpose, his efforts end in failure, for he defeats the purpose of his own creation.

Jesus, who is called "the second Adam," took the opposite course, saying, "I am come to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7). "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him..." (John 8:29). The desire to please the Father was His constant aim and His greatest pleasure. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me..." (John 4:34). He was in constant fellowship with God spending long periods of time in prayer. If we judge

Jesus by the common standards of modern society, He would appear to be a dismal failure. Yet, He is the only one of whom God has said, "...in whom I am well pleased."

In His great temptation, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Man was created with the capacity to think the very thoughts of God and to live in a mind-to-mind relationship with the Creator, and it is only as His will becomes our will that we can fulfill the purpose for which we are created. Hence the command: "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

Because of the Creator's purpose being rejected, the whole creation is in a state of chaos and death. "Thee whole creation groans and travails in pain even until now," wrote Paul (Rom. 8:22). With man himself in disorder, everything he touches becomes abnormal. Corruption and deceit permeate governments. Disease, poverty, starvation, violence and death abound. Such chaos prevails because man is not living in harmony with the purpose to which God is working. Everything that is at variance with God is under judgment and will not survive.

The good news is that God calls us out of this disaster through His Redeemer/Son, so that as new creature we can follow Him and fulfill the purpose for which we exist. What is most surprising is that this can be done regardless of conditions that prevail in the world. God is the Creator and the Transformer. He can fulfill His purpose in each believer, without the cooperation of the rest of the world. It was in a violent and wicked society that Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (John 6:34). One can fix his mind on God and seek his righteousness even when all the world is opposing Him. He is not subject to majority opinion, and neither must be His people.

Success in pleasing God does not depend on the environment or the government or on any external circumstance. It has external results and affects other people but does not depend on them. One may be sick, impoverished, or imprisoned and still think God's thoughts and be transformed by them into the creature God desires. The Christian's goal is to acquire the *mind of Christ*, and **nothing against his will** can defeat that purpose.

In view of these things so prevalent in New Testament scriptures, consider the goals espoused by modern churches: new and greater buildings, more money for more activities, and bigger crowds. One who wins the world's praise is exalted as a great Christian leader, in spite of Christ's warning: "That which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). The world rejects God's purpose to have man in His image. How can one gain the world's approval if his chief aim in life is the purpose which it rejects?

God's purpose is often overshadowed, if not completely denied, by those who picture that purpose as heaven, instead of life in God's image. The purpose God stated was not merely for man to be able to live in a glorious *place* but for him to be a glorious *being*.

The choice offered by Jesus is whether to *live* or to *perish* (John 3:16) — not **where** to live. It might come as a shock to many, but there are no statements in scripture about our living in heaven. The description given in Revelation 21 and 22 is a description of God's people on a new earth. The emphasis is on the kind of people that will be there to fellowship with God. Scripture is filled with expressions to motivate us toward godliness. The purpose of God is not just to fill His new creation with people but to fill it with people who desire to be what He desires them to be.

God's purpose is not just about our association with him in the world to come, but it's about acting out that purpose in the present world. It means treating everyone and everything according to the Creator's purpose, and this includes everyone and everything with which we have to do.

It is God's purpose that establishes the moral standard. For example, the gay and lesbian forces may cry to heaven about their "rights" to whatever substitute for sexual intercourse they choose, but as soon as one looks at God's purpose for sex in procreation as well as in bonding the family, their so-called rights are recognized as a mirage. It is hard to think of any activity that is more blatantly opposed to the Creator's purpose and order of creation than Homosexuality.

The deterioration of morals is readily recognized by all, but public leadership and the media do not want to link this moral failure with the fact that the schools, as well as the art and entertainment industries, go to great pains to teach that life is an accident, that there is no Creator and therefore no purpose to human existence.

Adam was created as the highest of all creatures and given dominion over all God's creation. Before his downfall by sin, he must have been a marvelous specimen of physical and spiritual beauty. But the glorified Christ, the very image of God, must be far more glorious than Adam, and Paul writes that we "shall be glorified with Him," to reflect the very glory of God. John writes that "we shall be like Him" (Rom. 8:17, I John 3:2). The biblical emphasis is not on where to go, but on what we shall be.

"And every one that has this hope set on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure" (John 3:3).

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