

EXPLORE GOD: WHAT'S MY PURPOSE?

Scriptures used: [Ecclesiastes 1:2 \(NIV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the first week of our *Explore God* series. We begin the series with the purpose of life. All of us want to know whether life has a purpose and, if it does, what that purpose is. We all struggle to make sense of why we're here at this particular moment and in this particular place. Is life just an accident of an uncaring universe operating blindly by natural laws? Or is there something more? We explore these questions along with the author of Ecclesiastes, likely King Solomon, who explored them as the most powerful person in the world. He lived the high life, trying every single way possible to find meaning and purpose. He built massive monuments, threw crazy parties, and amassed great wealth. None of it led to the purpose that he sought until he turned toward God. Only then did he discover the secret of life's purpose.

KEY POINTS

- 1. There are only two ways to search for purpose.** The question "What's my purpose?" can begin at different points, and the place where we start is incredibly important. Our starting point actually determines the answer to the question.
 - a. Beginning with ourselves.** It's natural to begin with our life. From there we speculate and guess, inventing potential answers to the question "what's my purpose?" This is what King Solomon describes in [Ecclesiastes 1:17 \(NLT\)](#), [Ecclesiastes 2:4-6 \(NLT\)](#), and [Ecclesiastes 2:8 \(NLT\)](#). Despite "having everything a man could desire" he never found purpose. It was like trying to catch your breath in your hand. There is a brief feeling of pressure and warmth, then nothing.
 - b. Beginning with God.** Instead of ourselves, we should start with God. This forces us to find our purpose within God and His plan, rather than inventing one for ourselves. Everything is made for His purposes, as it says in [Proverbs 16:4 \(NLT\)](#). When we turn to God we realize how much He loves us and desires good for us. [Ephesians 1:4 \(MSG\)](#) tells us that God wants us to be "whole and holy" by His love. These are clues to our purpose. It has to do with how God made us.
- 2. We are shaped for a cosmic relationship.** This is the most important relationship in our lives. We are meant to have only one "vertical" relationship, which connects each of us directly to God. Nothing else matters if that relationship is not strong. That's why Jesus tells us first to love God with all our passion, prayer, and intelligence in [Matthew 22:37-40 \(MSG\)](#). God comes first, always.
- 3. We are shaped for communal companionship.** If our vertical relationship with God is strong, then we can expand to our "horizontal" relationships. God's love flows through us to others, and we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves - the second half of [Matthew 22:37-40 \(MSG\)](#). Paul writes in [Ephesians 2:10 \(NIV\)](#) that we are "created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." This is the critical point: our purpose is found in those relationships. God loves us, and that love flows to others. King Solomon himself realizes this in [Ecclesiastes 12:13 \(GNT\)](#): "Have reverence for God, and obey his commands, because this is all that we were created for." That is our purpose!

DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR** - There are two kinds of purpose: "Big P" Purpose and "small p" purpose. Big P purpose is eternal, unchanging, and divine. Small p purpose is temporary and limited. God views us as His handiwork, His masterpiece. How do you think about purpose in your life right now?
- 2) UNDERSTAND** - As you consider the content of this message, remember these four basic actions and we can live into God's purpose every day: love God; love people; do good works; and spread the good news. Any person in any job in any situation can find a way to put these four actions into practice. What circumstances make you feel most connected to purpose? When do you feel like life is purposeless? How can you become more aware of intrinsic purpose that may be hidden in your life right now?
- 3) DO** - We start the Explore God series as a church, and continue it in small groups. Now is your chance to start a discussion group or join one that already exists. Many people from our church have been surprised with the response when they ask others to join. Pastor Hurmon and his wife were overwhelmed with responses and are doing two! Go to [the NBCC Explore God website](#) to get started, and join us next Sunday as we continue our Explore God series!