

Some Discipleship Lessons: 1. The Purposes of Our Life

When we survey the heavens, we are astounded at their vastness. The more we look, the more we are amazed at the complexities of the galaxies but the simplicity of the laws that govern their formation and motions. We look at our solar system to find a great deal of beauty and diversity among our planets. Strangely, only our earth supports life, and we discover that the laws that govern the stars dictate conditions on earth. When we view life on earth, we find that every aspect of the earth's position in the solar system is uniquely ideal to support life—to within a precision of a few percent at most. As we inspect the inner roots of physical life—cellular structures and substructures, especially the wonder of DNA encoding—we find incredible complexity and astounding order. DNA itself is a form of information encoding that is amazingly compact, efficient, and contains error detection and self-correction features that are still not available in human coding designs. All of the evidence before us in the universe testifies of its intelligent design—the design of God.

Where there is design, there is a designer. Where there is a designer, there is a design purpose. What is the purpose behind God's creation?

Read the following verses and discuss God's purposes they reveal:

RO 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

COL 1:13-18 For He [God, the Father] rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

2Ch 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are blameless toward Him. You have done foolishly in this; therefore, from now on you shall have wars.

GE 1:26-31 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given* every green plant for food"; and it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

GE 3:8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Some Facts About the Earth's Purpose to Support Life

1. Number of Stars (nary star system versus binary or trinary star system)

>1: tidal interactions disrupt planetary orbits—planets get swept into the stars themselves

<1: insufficient heat to support life

2. Parent star birth date

More recent: not yet stable burning phase

Less recent: stellar system would not yet contain enough heavy elements

3. Parent star age

Older: luminosity of star changes relatively quickly

Younger: luminosity of star changes too quickly

4. Parent star distance from center of galaxy

Farther: quantity of heavy elements insufficient to make rocky planets

Closer: stellar density and radiation too great

5. Parent star mass

Greater: Luminosity changes too quickly/star burns too rapidly

Less: range of distances appropriate for life would be too narrow; tidal forces disrupt the rotational period of a planet at the right distance

6. Parent star color

Redder: photosynthetic response insufficient

Bluer: photosynthetic response insufficient

7. Surface gravity

Stronger: too much ammonia and methane in the atmosphere

Weaker: atmosphere loses too much water

8. Distance from parent star

Farther: too cool for stable water cycle

Closer: too warm for stable water cycle

9. Thickness of crust

Thicker: too much oxygen transferred from atmosphere to crust

Thinner: volcanic & tectonic activity too disruptive

10. Rotation period

Longer: diurnal temperature differences too great; severe storms

Shorter: atmospheric wind velocities too great; severe storms

11. Gravitational interaction with moon

Greater: tidal effects on oceans, atmosphere, and rotational period too severe

Less: planet's orbital obliquity changes to cause climatic instabilities

12. Magnetic field

Stronger: electromagnetic storms too severe in effect on life

Weaker: inadequate protection from hard stellar radiation

13. Axial tilt

Greater: surface temperatures too great

Less: surface temperatures too great

14. Albedo (reflectivity)

Greater: runaway ice ages predominate

Less: greenhouse effect is insufficient

15. Oxygen to nitrogen ratio

Greater: oxygen in form of ozone too great

Less: insufficient oxygen for vigorous life

16. Carbon dioxide and water vapor levels

Greater: runaway greenhouse effect

Lesser: greenhouse effect insufficient

17. Ozone level

Greater: surface temperatures would be too low

Lesser: surface temperatures too high; too much UV radiation at the surface

18. Atmospheric discharge rate (i.e., lightning)

Greater: too much fire destruction

Less: inadequate nitrogen fixing in the soil

19. Seismic activity

Greater: too many life forms destroyed

Less: nutrients on ocean floors from river run-off would not be recycled to the continents through uplift

Note: changes greater than 10% from the conditions on earth are toxic to life; in many cases, changes of only a few percent would be disastrous.

Physics Factors (all factors critical to within +/- 5% or less)

Gravitational coupling constant (determines what kinds of stars are possible)

Stronger: more efficient; all stars are more massive than our sun by 1.4 times; large stars produce heavier elements than iron; however they burn too rapidly and too inconstantly to maintain life-supporting conditions on surrounding planets

Weaker: all stars would have 0.8 the mass of the sun; no heavy elements, etc.

Strong nuclear force coupling constant (holds together particles in atomic nuclei) (critical +/-1%)

Slightly stronger: nuclear particles would tend to bond more frequently and firmly; hydrogen would be rare, and the supply of life-essential heavier elements would be insufficient

Slightly weaker: multi-proton nuclei would not hold together; hydrogen would be the only element in the universe

Weak nuclear force coupling constant (affects the behavior of leptons such as electrons, neutrinos, and photons)

Stronger: no helium, no heavy elements

Weaker: all helium; over-abundance of heavy elements; no hydrogen

Electromagnetic coupling constant (binds electrons to protons in atoms; determines degree of bonding between atoms in molecules)

Weaker or stronger: molecules for life cease to exist

Ratio of electron to proton mass (1:1836)

Larger or smaller: molecules do not form; life impossible

Entropy level of the universe (affects how massive systems – galaxies and stars – condense (ratio of photons to baryons: billion to one – extremely entropic; very efficient radiator and a poor engine))

Larger: no galactic systems and no stars

Smaller: galactic systems that formed would effectively trap radiation and prevent fragmentation of the systems into stars; no stars = no life.

Helium (4), Carbon (12), Oxygen (16), and Beryllium (8) nuclear energy levels (Beryllium-8 is highly unstable, having a half-life of 10^{-17} seconds; however, it is a transition element in the formation of heavier elements (notably Carbon and Oxygen essential for life). How can heavier elements be formed? Resonance involving helium-4, Beryllium-8, and Carbon-12? Mass-energy of each nucleus is fixed and cannot change; kinetic energy depends upon internal star temperature, which can be calculated. Hoyle predicted (1954) that there must be a previously undetected energy level in the carbon-12 nucleus that would resonate with the combined energies of its constituent parts, under conditions prevailing inside of stars. Subsequent experiments confirmed this prediction precisely at an energy level of 7.6 MeV. Critical: 1 part in 22 Billion!)

Note: there are at least 17 additional factors identified by Sir Frederick Hoyle in 1954 that are equally precise in requirement but in scientific dispute about their impact on the possibility of life. These levels of precision are viewed as evidence of design since there are no known mechanisms among physical laws to force these levels of precision.

Lesson 1. Purposes of Our Life Leader's Guide:

A. Have the group read the lead paragraph. Spend about 15 minutes in a guided discussion. See if you can develop agreement with the main discussion points. Spend another 5-7 minutes with each of the illustrative examples. Look at the following discussion points:

The stars are highly organized in spite of the apparent chaos and randomness of the night sky. Stars are clustered into galaxies, and galaxies are clustered into super-clusters. The galaxies and super-clusters all have similar forms and shapes of only a few types. Furthermore, the super-clusters are organized into 'shells' that are related in the red shift of the light they emit. These forms and shapes have been shown to be the result of the states of stability that can exist under a single law—the Law of Gravity. We have also found that every star, that is near enough for us to investigate with the most powerful telescopic instruments we have, seems to have a planetary system similar to our solar system.

In our solar system, the earth occupies an orbit that is 93 (+/- 2) million miles in diameter. If the earth orbit were more elliptical (such as that of Pluto) or if it were closer or farther away by more than 5 million miles, life could not be sustained on earth—the variations in the solar energy reaching the earth would be too great, the mix of chemical elements would be incorrect for protein formation, the weather conditions would be too harsh for higher life forms. There are over 2-dozen other factors that have to be "just right" (as we observe them to within a few percent) for life to be sustained as we know it. The earth is in the right position in our solar system, our sun is the right size and type, our solar system is in the right position in our galaxy, the earth is the right mass, the angle of tilt of the earth on its axis is right, etc. In spite of the incredible number of stars in the observable universe and the presumed number of planetary system, observations yield statistics telling us that the earth is incredibly unique. Fewer than 0.001% of planets are likely to be able to sustain life—assuming that planetary systems are common to virtually every unary star system.

The more we have learned about Deoxyribonucleic Acids (DNA) and the way DNA governs the formation and growth of physical life, the more we observe incredible evidence of design. DNA itself consists of only four chemical expressions and these are always found in pairings (that is, there are two pairs of chemicals and the pairings are always the same). Nevertheless, DNA coding is a three-out-of-four, error-correcting code stored in every cell of every living organism. Each DNA expression is unique to the organism. The cells of the organism can store, retrieve, copy, and process the DNA in the processes of growth. The copy and reproduce processes of organic growth occur millions of times in the life of the typical higher organism, but the DNA coding ensures faithful reproduction to a precision of 1 part in 10 to the 14th power. (Therefore, the chance of a mutation is less than 1 in 10 million in a lifetime.) The DNA, although incredibly simple in concept, supports the even more incredible diversity of organic life. Both plants and animals share common genetic expressions. All animals share about 90% commonality in genetic coding. All humans share over 99% commonality in DNA code, yet that less than 1% in variation supports nearly 10 billion times more people than have ever lived on earth!

The observational evidence is that simple physical laws determine a huge amount of complexity. The impressively robust biochemical information coding of DNA supports tremendous diversity. These observations tell us that the universe is the product of intelligent design—an intelligence much higher than any of the great engineering minds over the centuries of human endeavor. Diversity and complexity expressed through extreme simplicity are evidences of intelligent design. Furthermore, a design attribute known as irreducible complexity, used to analyze a device or organism into its simplest component parts, demonstrates (irrefutably) that the functional components of each organism cannot arise from random processes. The function of each component part is determined by information coded in DNA. Information cannot arise spontaneously; it is the product of intellectual effort. Intellectual effort is an expression of intelligent design toward purposeful goals.

Our conclusion—all of our observed universe, including life itself, cannot "just happen"—everything is the product of a Creator, our infinitely intelligent and almighty God. Furthermore, everything that **is** exists in accordance with **His purposes**.

Illustrative example 1: **a simple mousetrap**. Consider a simple mousetrap. It consists of a platform, a spring, a hammer, a catch, and a holding bar (each fastened to the platform). None of the component parts can perform the function of a mousetrap alone—the higher functionality of the trap is only attained through the combination of these components—something that requires intelligent decision toward a purposeful goal. Furthermore, the spring, hammer, and catch (as a minimum) do not occur naturally; they must be designed and manufactured. (It could be argued that the platform and maybe the holding bar could be found under rare naturally occurring circumstances, although never in quantities sufficient for marketing.) The result—our observation of a mousetrap is that it is the product of intelligent and purposeful design and manufacturing effort, not the result of random or spontaneous events in nature acting in accordance with natural laws.

Illustrative example 2: **a watch**. Consider a watch. I assert to you that I was walking on the beach when I happened to look down just as a wave washed up. The wave action in combination with the bright sunlight caused the sands to spontaneously assemble into this watch. Do you believe or disbelieve me? Why?

B. Have the group examine the 5 verses in the lesson. Spend about 10 minutes reading the verses and the remaining time discussing what they express about God's purpose in creation, and especially in creating life. **Please note that the purposes expressed in these verses are NOT exhaustive. Other purposes will be examined in subsequent lessons.**

Romans 11:33 should tell us that we cannot know all of God's purposes in His creation. **One of His purposes is for us to give Him glory as the Creator.**

Colossians 1:13 also tells us that the creation is for the **glory** of our Lord. In addition, it tells us that He is still actively **involved in His creation**—holding all things together and saving us according to His choice. WOW!

2 Chronicles 16:9 tells us that the Lord continues **to interact with His creation** to demonstrate His strength, grace, and judgment. All of these serve to **glorify Him**.

Genesis 1:26 tells us that Man has a special position in the Creation purpose. Man is created in the image of God—what does this imply?

That mankind occupies a key purpose in the plan of God in the Creation.

In addition, we see God intended for us to rule over His creation. What does this mean?

That mankind occupies a key purpose in the plan of God in the Creation.

In Genesis 1:31, God pronounces the Creation as very good—what does this mean?

That it fully met all of His purposes.

What purpose is revealed in Genesis 3:8 where the LORD God is walking in the garden in the cool of the day?

That one of God's purposes is to fellowship with MAN.

Summary:

The creation is to Glorify god.

The Lord created in order to interact with the creation.

Man is pivotal in God's plan and purpose—our ultimate purpose is to fellowship with Him and to be a source of glory to Him.

Some Discipleship Lessons: 2. The Purposes of Our Life

Where there is design, there is a designer. Where there is a designer, there is a design purpose. What is the purpose behind God's creation? In the first lesson, we found some of those purposes. They were:

The creation is to Glorify god.

The Lord created in order to interact with the creation.

Man is pivotal in God's plan and purpose—our ultimate purpose is to fellowship with Him and to be a source of glory to Him.

Read the following verses and discuss God's purposes they reveal:

^{1CO 8:6} Yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.

^{RO 1:18-21} For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

^{PS 119:89-91} Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness *continues* throughout all generations; You established the earth, and it stands. They stand this day according to Your ordinances, for all things are Your servants.

^{ISA 45:18} For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it *and* did not create it a waste place, *but* formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and there is none else."

^{PS 24:1-6} The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face—even Jacob. Selah.

^{PS 121:1} I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help *comes* from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

Are the purposes of God discovered so far independent or interdependent?

Now summarize the purposes that have been revealed so far.

Using Tinkertoys, or Legos, or some similar toy, spend 10 minutes, working as a group, building something representative of the glory of God's creation.

Lesson 2. Purposes of Our Life Leader's Guide:

A. Have the group examine the 6 verses in the lesson. Spend about 10 minutes reading the verses and the remaining time discussing what they express about God's purpose in creation, and especially in creating life. **Please note that the purposes expressed in these verses are NOT exhaustive. Other purposes will be examined in subsequent lessons.**

1 Corinthians 8:6 expresses that **we exist for Him and through Him.**

Romans 1:19-20 tells us that the creation has a purpose of **revealing God and His attributes to us.**

Psalms 119:91 reveals a purpose that we are created to **serve God.**

Isaiah 45:18 tells us that **life** is a key purpose of God, especially human life.

Psalms 24:1 says that we belong to the Lord and that **we must serve Him according to His revealed will**—the law.

Psalms 121:1 tells us that the **Lord has determined to help us.**

B. Allocate about 10 minutes to discuss the question. It should become obvious that the purposes are interdependent and inter-related.

C. Allocate about 15 minutes for group discussion of the summary.

D. Using Tinkertoys, or Legos, or some similar toy, spend 10 minutes working in a group building something representative of the glory of God's creation. **This is hard to do in 10 minutes. It is hard to focus on the goal and to determine how to fulfill the goal. It is hard to agree how to represent something abstract with something concrete. It is hard to build something using predefined available parts. Hopefully, this gives us an appreciation for the intelligence and thoughtfulness that is inherent in the design process, therefore, design represents purposeful effort by an intelligent being rather than the result of a random process. Even where random processes can produce a useful functional item, it requires an extraordinary amount of time (more time than is available in the age of the universe) and most functions cannot be done by randomness.**

Summary:

The creation is to glorify and worship God.

The Lord created in order to interact with the creation.

Man is pivotal in God's plan and purpose—our ultimate purpose is to fellowship with Him and to be a source of glory to Him. God seeks to save man to allow him to fulfill His purposes.

We are to serve the Lord.

We are to seek out what God reveals of Himself in order to develop our fellowship with Him.

As we fellowship with God, we will receive help from God.

If we take the broad view of the key concepts, we could simplify this summary as follows:

Worship

Fellowship

Service

Some Discipleship Lessons: 3. The Purposes of Our Life—Our Human Perspective

Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal (the verse quotes below are from the Amplified Bible):

^{Ecc 1:1-3} **THE WORDS** of the Preacher, the son of David and king in Jerusalem. Vapor of vapors *and* futility of futilities, says the Preacher. Vapor of vapors *and* futility of futilities! All is vanity (emptiness, falsity, and vainglory). What profit does man have left from all his toil at which he toils under the sun? [Is life worth living?]

Ecclesiastes 1:4 through Ecclesiastes 2

Ecclesiastes 3 through Ecclesiastes 6

Ecclesiastes 7 through Ecclesiastes 9

Ecclesiastes 10 through Ecclesiastes 12:12

^{Ecc 12:13-14} All has been heard; the end of the matter is: Fear God [revere and worship Him, knowing that He is] and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man [the full, original purpose of his creation, the object of God's providence, the root of character, the foundation of all happiness, the adjustment to all inharmonious circumstances and conditions under the sun] *and* the whole [duty] for every man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it is good or evil.

What do these verses reveal?

What is the purpose of the book of Ecclesiastes?

What is the purpose of YOUR life?

Leadership Guide Lessons: 3. The Purposes of Our Life—Our Human Perspective

Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal (the verse quotes below are from the Amplified Bible):

Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived according to 1 Kings 3:10-14, noting especially verse 13. Solomon was given great grace by which he was able to experience everything his heart could desire, yet his heart could not be satisfied. (See Ecclesiastes 2:10-11.) He asked, “What is the meaning of life? (everything is vanity)” After trying everything:

Ecclesiastes 1:4 through Ecclesiastes 2 **nature; scholarly pursuit of knowledge; wine; houses; gardens; flocks; herds; gold; silver; entertainment; sex; monuments**

Ecclesiastes 3 through Ecclesiastes 6 **justice, death is the great equalizer; skilled labor; money**

Ecclesiastes 7 through Ecclesiastes 9 **a good name/reputation; wisdom; power; righteousness; fine clothes**

Ecclesiastes 10 through Ecclesiastes 12:12 **nobility; doing good; dreaming; hard toil; religion; writing any books**
All is vanity!

Ecc 12:13-14 All has been heard; the end of the matter is: **Fear God** [revere and worship Him, knowing that He is] **and keep His commandments**, for this is the whole of man [the full, original purpose of his creation, the object of God’s providence, the root of character, the foundation of all happiness, the adjustment to all inharmonious circumstances and conditions under the sun] *and* the whole [duty] for every man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it is good or evil.

What do these verses reveal? **The normal pursuits of meaning in one’s life—accomplishments, accolades of men/reputation, power, wealth, monuments, etc.—offered by the world do not satisfy. Rather, God has provided for men to enjoy the fruit of their daily labors that provide sustenance—food and drink and shelter and clothing. There is a desire for an everlasting memorial, but this cannot be supplied by our efforts—it can only be provided by God Himself in Christ Jesus.**

What is the purpose of the book of Ecclesiastes? **To record the results of Solomon’s quest for meaning in life—what provides (or fails to provide) purpose to one’s existence. Our personal relationship with God is critical. Do you worship your Creator in your life? Do you obey His commandments [do His will] in everything?**

What is the purpose of YOUR life? **Have each person in the group write down their answers to the following questions. Based on Solomon’s testimony in Ecclesiastes discuss changes in our lives that would lead to greater satisfaction and fulfillment in life.**

Does your concept of what satisfies align with God’s plan?

Are you satisfied with your life?

What in your life gives you the greatest satisfaction?

What in your life leads to dissatisfaction?

Some Discipleship Lessons: 4. Nature of God's Purpose

Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal (the verse quotes below are from the Amplified Bible):

Eph 3:8-12 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints (God's consecrated people), this grace (favor, privilege) was granted *and* graciously entrusted: to **proclaim to the Gentiles** the unending (boundless, fathomless, incalculable, and exhaustless) **riches of Christ** [wealth which no human being could have searched out], Also to **enlighten** all men *and* make plain to them **what is the plan** [regarding the Gentiles and **providing for the salvation of all men**] of the mystery kept hidden through the ages *and* concealed until now in [the mind of] God Who created all things *by Christ Jesus*. [**The purpose is**] that through the church the complicated, many-sided wisdom of God in all its infinite variety *and* innumerable aspects might now be made known to the angelic rulers and authorities (principalities and powers) in the heavenly sphere. This is in accordance with the terms of the eternal *and* timeless **purpose which He has realized** *and* carried into effect in [the person of] Christ Jesus our Lord, In Whom, because of our faith in Him, we dare to have the boldness (courage and confidence) of free access (an unreserved approach to God with freedom and without fear).

2Ti 1:9-10 [For it is He] Who delivered *and* saved us and called us with a calling in itself holy *and* leading to holiness [to a life of consecration, a vocation of holiness]; [He did it] not because of anything of merit that we have done, but because of *and* to further **His own purpose and grace** (unmerited favor) which was **given us in Christ Jesus before the world began** [eternal ages ago]. [It is that purpose and grace] which He now has made known *and* has fully disclosed *and* made real [to us] through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who annulled death *and* made it of no effect and brought life and immortality (immunity from eternal death) to light through the Gospel.

Ro 8:28-30 We are assured *and* know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together *and* are [**fitting into a plan**] for good to *and* for those who love God and are called **according to** [His] **design and purpose**. For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was aware and loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness], that He might become the firstborn among many brethren. And those whom He thus foreordained, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified (acquitted, made righteous, putting them into right standing with Himself). And those whom He justified, He also glorified [raising them to a heavenly dignity and condition or state of being].

Jer 4:28 The earth will mourn, the heavens will be draped in black, because of My decree against My people. **I have made up My mind and will not change it.**"

Isa 14:24 The LORD Almighty has sworn this oath: "**It will all happen as I have planned. It will come about according to my purposes.**"

Discuss how God's purpose, God's will, God's decree, God's plan, and God's law are related.

Leadership Guide Lessons: 4. Nature of God's Purpose

A. Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal (the verse quotes below are from the Amplified Bible):

We should find the following characteristics of God's purposes:

Nature of the Purposes of God:

Eternal—Ephesians 3:11

Unchanging—Jeremiah 4:28

Certain of Accomplishment—Isaiah 14:24

Salvation—Romans 8:28-30

Centered in Christ—2 Timothy 1:9

Why are these purposes important?

What do God's purposes reveal about His character?

Discuss how God's purpose, God's will, God's decree, God's plan, and God's law are related.

These are essentially equivalent concepts because God is almighty in power and able to bring His plans to fruition against all opposition.

Some Discipleship Lessons: 5. Worship

Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal (the verse quotes below are from the Amplified Bible):

Jn 4:20-24 [Woman at the well.] Our forefathers worshiped on this mountain, but you [Jews] say that Jerusalem is the place where it is necessary *and* proper to worship. Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither [merely] in this mountain nor [merely] in Jerusalem. You [Samaritans] do not know what you are worshiping [you worship what you do not comprehend]. We do know what we are worshiping [we worship what we have knowledge of and understand], for [after all] salvation comes from [among] the Jews. A time will come, however, indeed it is already here, when the true (genuine) worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth (reality); for the Father is seeking just such people as these as His worshipers. God is a Spirit (a spiritual Being) and those who worship Him **must worship Him in spirit and in truth** (reality).”

Ex 20:1-17 THEN GOD spoke all these words: “I am the Lord your God, Who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before *or* besides Me. You shall not make yourself any graven image [to worship it] or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; You shall not bow down yourself to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing mercy *and* steadfast love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments. You shall not use *or* repeat the name of the Lord your God in vain [that is, lightly or frivolously, in false affirmations or profanely]; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. [Earnestly] remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy (withdrawn from common employment and dedicated to God). Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your domestic animals, or the sojourner within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it [set it apart for His purposes]. Regard (treat with honor, due obedience, and courtesy) your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God gives you. You shall not commit murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not witness falsely against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house, your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Dt 6:4 Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord [the only Lord]. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart and with your entire being and with all your might. And these words which I am commanding you this day shall be [first] in your [own] minds *and* hearts; [then] you shall whet *and* sharpen them so as to make them penetrate, *and* teach *and* impress them diligently upon the [minds and] hearts of your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets (forehead bands) between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates. And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you, with great and goodly cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and when you eat and are full, then beware lest you forget the Lord, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall [reverently] fear the Lord your God and serve Him and swear by His name [and presence].

Jn 3:14-17 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert [on a pole], so must [so it is necessary that] the Son of Man be lifted up [on the cross], in order that everyone who believes in Him [who cleaves to Him, trusts Him, and relies on Him] may *not perish, but* have eternal life *and* [actually] live forever! For God so greatly loved *and* dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life. For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on) the world, but that the world might find salvation *and* be made safe *and* sound through Him.

A Psalm of thanksgiving *and* for the thank offering.

Ps 100:1-5 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come before His presence with singing! Know (perceive, recognize, and understand with approval) that the Lord is God! It is He Who has made us, not we ourselves [and we are His]! We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving *and* a thank offering and into His courts with praise! Be thankful *and* say so to Him, bless *and* affectionately praise His name! For the Lord is good; His mercy *and* loving-kindness are everlasting, His faithfulness *and* truth endure to all generations.

Ps 150:1-6 PRAISE THE Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the heavens of His power! Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to the abundance of His greatness! Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with lute and harp! Praise Him with tambourine and [single or group] dance; praise Him with stringed and wind instruments *or* flutes! Praise Him with resounding cymbals; praise Him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath *and* every breath of life praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! (Hallelujah!)

2Sa 6:2-19 And [he] arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah [Kiriath-jearim] to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, Who sits enthroned above the cherubim. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, with the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord with all their might, with songs, lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals. And when they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled *and* shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for touching the ark, and he died there by the ark of God. David was grieved *and* offended because the Lord had broken forth upon Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah [the breaking forth upon Uzzah] to this day. David was afraid of the Lord that day and said, How can the ark of the Lord come to me? So David was not willing to take the ark of the Lord to him into the City of David; but he took it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household. And it was told King David, The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the City of David with rejoicing; and when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. And David danced before the Lord with all his might, clad in a linen ephod [a priest's upper garment]. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. As the ark of the Lord came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter [David's wife], looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart. They brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it, and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name [and presence] of the Lord of hosts, and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both to men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, each to his house.

Leadership Guide Lessons: 5. Worship

A. Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal (the verse quotes below are from the Amplified Bible): **Spend another 20 minutes discussing the group findings.**

John 4—that we are to worship in spirit and in truth

Exodus 20 [10 Commandments]—we are to worship the Lord only [not the gods of this world], the first 4 commandments relate to our relationship with God. Worship is obedience to His Will (i.e., the Law). Although stated in the form of commandment, it is a loving expression of His design for our lives—we cannot have fulfillment without conforming to His design.

Deuteronomy 6—we should worship out of love—a total commitment of our being, leading to obedience to His will.

Spend 5-7 minutes apiece on answering each of the following questions.

B. What does the word “worship” mean?

1. **Reverence** or devotion for a deity; religious homage or veneration; a church service or rite showing this.
2. **Extreme devotion** or **intense love** or admiration of any kind; idolize.
3. To show religious devotion or reverence for; adore or venerate as a deity.
4. To offer prayers, attend church services, etc.

i.e, worship is not merely singing or praying. To worship in spirit and in truth, we must **experience** our relationship with God—know that He loves us and cares for us and is with us and hears us when we call.

In Spirit & In Truth (John 4:24)

- Humbly
- Reverently
- Joyfully
- Thankfully
- Generously giving glory & praise to God
- Sacrificially
- Prayerfully
- Seeking fellowship with our Lord
- Obediently
- Willingly
- Seeking to encourage & to edify others

C. What does this concept of worship mean to your life?

In congregation

In solitude

At home

At work

At recreation

In service to the Lord

–Serving the needs of people within and outside the church

D. How do you worship?

E. Is your worship continual and complete/total? –if not, why not? --if so, how do you accomplish this?

Capsule Summary—God loves to love and loves to be loved.

Some Discipleship Lessons: 6. Fellowship

Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal (the verse quotes below are from the Amplified Bible):

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider *and* give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love *and* helpful deeds *and* noble activities, Not forsaking *or* neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching.

Heb 3:12-14 [Therefore beware] brethren, take care, lest there be in any one of you a wicked, unbelieving heart [which refuses to cleave to, trust in, and rely on Him], leading you to turn away *and* desert *or* stand aloof from the living God. But instead warn (admonish, urge, and encourage) one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened [into settled rebellion] by the deceitfulness of sin [by the fraudulence, the stratagem, the trickery which the delusive glamor of his sin may play on him]. For we have become fellows with Christ (the Messiah) *and* share in all He has for us, if only we hold our first newborn confidence *and* original assured expectation [in virtue of which we are believers] firm *and* unshaken to the end.

Gal 6:1-10 Brethren, if any person is overtaken in misconduct *or* sin of any sort, you who are spiritual [who are responsive to and controlled by the Spirit] should set him right *and* restore *and* reinstate him, without any sense of superiority *and* with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also. Bear (endure, carry) one another's burdens *and* troublesome moral faults, and in this way fulfill *and* observe perfectly the law of Christ (the Messiah) *and* complete what is lacking [in your obedience to it]. For if any person thinks himself to be somebody [too important to condescend to shoulder another's load] when he is nobody [of superiority except in his own estimation], he deceives *and* deludes *and* cheats himself. But let every person carefully scrutinize *and* examine *and* test his own conduct *and* his own work. He can then have the personal satisfaction *and* joy of doing something commendable [in itself alone] without [resorting to] boastful comparison with his neighbor. For every person will have to bear (be equal to understanding and calmly receive) his own [little] load [of oppressive faults]. Let him who receives instruction in the Word [of God] share all good things with his teacher [contributing to his support]. Do not be deceived *and* deluded *and* misled; God will not allow Himself to be sneered at (scorned, disdained, or mocked by mere pretensions or professions, or by His precepts being set aside.) [He inevitably deludes himself who attempts to delude God.] For whatever a man sows, that *and* that only is what he will reap. For he who sows to his own flesh (lower nature, sensuality) will from the flesh reap decay *and* ruin *and* destruction, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart *and* grow weary *and* faint in acting nobly *and* doing right, for in due time *and* at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen *and* relax our courage *and* faint. So then, as occasion *and* opportunity open up to us, let us do good [morally] to all people [not only being useful or profitable to them, but also doing what is for their spiritual good and advantage]. Be mindful to be a blessing, especially to those of the household of faith [those who belong to God's family with you, the believers].

Lev 19:18 You shall not take revenge or bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

Ps 133:1 BEHOLD, HOW good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

See also John 17 [entire chapter]

Leadership Guide Lessons: 6. Fellowship

A. Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal (the verse quotes below are from the Amplified Bible): **Spend another 20 minutes discussing the group findings.**

Hebrews 10:24-25 **And let us consider how we may stir up each other to love *and* good deeds and encouraging) one another [in the Lord].**

Hebrews 3:12-14 **brethren, take care, lest there be in any one of you a wicked, unbelieving heart leading you to stand aloof from the living God. But instead encourage one another every day, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become fellows with Christ *and* share in all He has for us.**

Galatians 6 **Brethren, if any person is overtaken by any sin, you who are spiritual [who have the victory in Christ over that sin] should set him right *and* restore *and* reinstate him, without any sense of superiority *and* with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also. Bear one another's moral faults, and in this way fulfill *and* observe perfectly the law of Christ.** For every person will have to bear the consequences of his own conduct. **For whatever a man sows, that is what he will reap.** For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap destruction, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. So then, as opportunity open up to us, let us do good to all people, especially to believers.

Leviticus 19:18 **We love our neighbor—see Luke 10:25-37 [the Good Samaritan], showing unconditional love.**

Psalms 133 **We live together in UNITY [God detests division; the devil promotes division].**

John 17 **dwelling in love and unity is enabled only in Christ.**

B. Spend some time summarizing FELLOWSHIP. **Fellowship is well defined in Hebrews 10:24-25 [see above] However, fellowship is also loving each other in relationship so that we protect each other from sinning and work to restore each other to grace when we do sin. In other words, fellowship promotes spiritual growth and unity with God and within the Body of Christ.** Fellowship is NOT just a bunch of Christians 'hanging out' together. It is loving each other so much that we seek to help each other NOT to sin—holding each other accountable, yet in love rather than judgmentally. Fellowship brings us into grace, and that grace is applied in our worship, our relationships with each other, and our service.

Some Discipleship Lessons: 7. Serving the Lord

Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal:

EPH 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Mt 25:31-33 When the Son of Man comes in His glory (His majesty and splendor), and all the *holy* angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them [the people] from one another as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats; And He will cause the sheep to stand at His right hand, but the goats at His left.

Mt 25:34-40 Then the King will say to those at His right hand, "Come, you blessed of My Father [you favored of God and appointed to eternal salvation], inherit (receive as your own) the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you brought Me together with yourselves *and* welcomed *and* entertained *and* lodged Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me with help *and* ministering care, I was in prison and you came to see Me." [Isa. 58:7] Then the just *and* upright will answer Him, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and gave You food, or thirsty and gave You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger and welcomed *and* entertained You, or naked and clothed You? And when did we see You sick or in prison and came to visit You?" And the King will reply to them, "Truly I tell you, in so far as you did it for one of the least [in the estimation of men] of these My brethren, you did it for Me." [Prov. 19:17]

Mt 25:41-46 Then He will say to those at His left hand, "Begone from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me *and* entertain Me, I was naked and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit Me with help *and* ministering care." ... Then they will go away into eternal punishment, but those who are just *and* upright *and* in right standing with God into eternal life.

COL 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

1Co 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

RO 10:14-16 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"

Phil 2:14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

1CO 9:23 I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

EPH 6:5-8 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

Leadership Guide Lessons: 7. Serving the Lord

A. Divide up into groups and spend 30 minutes reading the following verses and preparing to discuss what they reveal: **Spend another 20 minutes or so discussing the group findings.**

1. Service leads to fulfillment in life because it fulfills God's purpose for you—individually and uniquely.

2. Serving the Lord means doing His will and fulfilling His commandments with love, joy, and zeal. In other words, Service is performed in a context of Worship.

3. Serving the Lord leads to acts of lovingkindness fulfilling the needs of others.

4. Serving the Lord allows the Lord to live through you, manifesting His wisdom and power in you life. Service cannot be performed without submission to the Holy Spirit.

5. Service always communicates the Gospel of Christ—the grace of God toward the world, but our service is not always well-received nor effective. Consider the ministries Jeremiah or Ezekiel or John the Baptist.

6. There is NO aspect of our lives that is not a ministry unto the Lord. If God has given you anything to do (home life, job, friends through a hobby), you have a service toward Him.

7. All service glorifies God. The Lord is glorified through souls being led to salvation, people giving praise and thanksgiving to Him, through increased worship and fellowship.

Spend about 10 minutes apiece on the following questions.

B. How are your CALLING and your ministry and your service to the Lord related?

They are all equal—just viewed from different perspectives.

C. Do you have only one service to the Lord or many? —explain.

You can view serving the Lord as a single ministry—as in Romans 12:1-2—or you can view your life as many ministries to the Lord. However, the Bible's perspective tends to support the concept of single ministry with many different aspects to it. Why? Because we are called to be people of integrity—a single unit, integrated by Christ. As we grow more spiritually mature, we become more integrated and the concept of a single ministry of life serving the Lord is more and more real.

D. Describe your personal service to the Lord. Do you recognize every calling on you life?

Probably not.

E. Do you have the same ministry to the Lord throughout your entire life?

Yes in the sense that we have a single, unified ministry of serving the Lord in our lives. On the other hand, our ministry changes with time. Family changes, job changes, etc., all influence our serving of the Lord.

F. How do you know what your ministry is?

What has God prepared in you as talents and gifts? What are your circumstances? What does the Bible say relative to your circumstances? What do you have a hunger and thirst to do? What do you enjoy doing? What do you dream about accomplishing? Answers to these questions help to identify how God wants you to serve Him.

CALL Personal: By Christ (Isa 55:5; Ro 1:6), his Spirit (Rev 22:17), his works (Ps 19:2-3; Ro 1:20), his ministers (Jer 35:15; 2Co 5:20), his gospel (2Th 2:14). Is from darkness to light (1Pe 2:9). Addressed to all (Isa 45:22; Mt 20:16). Most reject (Pr 1:24; Mt 20:16). Effective to believers (Ps 110:3; Ac 13:48; 1Co 1:24). Not to many wise by human standards (1Co 1:26). To repentance (Isa 55:1). To believers is of grace (Gal 1:6; 2Ti 1:9), according to the purpose of God (Ro 8:28; 9:11, 23-24), without repentance (Ro 11:29), high (Php 3:14), holy (2Ti 1:9), heavenly (Heb 3:1), to fellowship with Christ (1Co 1:9), to holiness (1Th 4:7), to a prize (Php 3:14), to liberty (Gal 5:13), to peace (1Co 7:15; Col 3:15), to glory and virtue (2Pe 1:3), to the eternal glory of Christ (2Th 2:14; 1Pe 5:10), to eternal life (1Ti 6:12). Partakers of justified (Ro 8:30), walk worthy of (Eph 4:1; 2Th 1:11), blessedness of receiving (Rev 19:9), is to be made sure (2Pe 1:10), praise God for (1Pe 2:9), illustrated (Pr 8:3-4; Mt 23:3-9). Rejected (Jer 6:16; Mt 22:3-7). Rejection of leads to judicial blindness (Isa 6:9, w Ac 28:24-27; Ro 11:8-10), delusion (Isa 66:4; 2Th 2:10-11), withdrawal of the means of grace (Jer 26:4-6; Ac 13:46; 18:6; Rev 2:5), temporal judgments (Isa 28:12; Jer 6:16, 19; 35:17; Zec 7:12-14), rejection by God (Pr 1:24-32; Jer 6:19, 30), condemnation (Jn 12:48; Heb 2:1-3; 12:25), destruction (Pr 29:1; Mt 22:3-7).

DIVISIONS [H477, H1074, H1522, H2745, H4713, H7372, H8031, H10585, G1375, G1496, G5388]. Forbidden in the church (1Co 1:10). Condemned in the church (1Co 1:11-13; 11:18). Improper in the church (1Co 12:24-25). Are contrary to the: Unity of Christ (1Co 1:13; 12:13). Desire of Christ (Jn 17:21-23). **Purpose of Christ** (Jn 10:16). Spirit of the primitive church (1Co 11:16). Are a proof of a sinful spirit (1Co 3:3). Avoid those who cause (Ro 16:17). Evil of, illustrated (Mt 12:25).

ELECT [G1723, G1724] (*chosen*). **Those chosen by God for some special purpose** (Ps 106:23; Isa 43:10; 45:4). Among the elect mentioned in Scripture are Moses, the Israelites, Christ, the angels, Christ's disciples.

ELECTION [G1724]. By grace (Mt 22:14; Jn 15:16; 17:6; Ro 11:5; Eph 1:4; 2:10; 2Th 2:13; 1Pe 2:9). Of Israel (Dt 7:6; Isa 45:4). Of rulers (Ne 11:1). Of Christ as Messiah (Isa 42:1; 1Pe 2:6). Of ministers (Lk 6:13; Ac 9:15). Of good angels (1Ti 5:21). Of churches (1Pe 5:13). See *Chosen; Elect; Predestination*.

EPHESIANS, EPISTLE TO THE

Outline:

- I. Greetings (1:1-2).
- II. The Divine Purpose: The Glory and Headship of Christ (1:3-14).
- III. Prayer That Christians May Realize God's Purpose and Power (1:15-23).
- IV. Steps Toward the Fulfillment of God's Purpose (chs. 2-3).
 - A. Salvation of Individuals by Grace (2:1-10).
 - B. Reconciliation of Jew and Gentile Through the Cross (2:11-18).
 - C. Uniting of Jew and Gentile in One Household (2:19-22).
 - D. Revelation of God's Wisdom Through the Church (3:1-13).
 - E. Prayer for Deeper Experience of God's Fullness (3:14-21).
- V. Practical Ways to Fulfill God's Purpose in the Church (4:1-6:20).
 - A. Unity (4:1-6).
 - B. Maturity (4:7-16).
 - C. Renewal of Personal Life (4:17-5:20).
 - D. Deference in Personal Relationships (5:21-6:9).
 1. Principle (5:21).
 2. Husbands and wives (5:22-33).
 3. Children and parents (6:1-4).
 4. Slaves and masters (6:5-9).
 - E. Strength in the Spiritual Conflict (6:10-20).
- VI. Conclusion, Final Greetings and Benediction (6:21-24).

Faith, The Purpose of: To gain understanding and to grow in the truth (Ps 119:97-105, 129-131; Jn 8:31-32; 2Ti 2:15; 1Jn 2:5, 14). To grow in the grace of God (Ac 2:42-47; Ro 4:4-5; 5:2; 1Co 15:10; Eph 4:15; Heb 4:16). To help us to rejoice through our faith (Ro 5:2-5, 11; 15:13; Php 1:18-19; 2:17-18). To strengthen the man of faith (Ro 6:12-14; 11:20; 1Co 9:27; Php 4:6-7; 2Th 3:3; 2Ti 4:7-8; 1Pe 1:3-5). To be transformed into the image of Christ (Ro 8:29; 1Co 15:49; 2Co 3:18; 4:3-6). To become strong people of faith (Eph 4:1-3, 11-13, 15-16).

The Family; Religion in: Purpose: To keep the way of the Lord (Ge 18:19), to keep children from sinning (Job 1:5), to be an example to the household (Ps 101:2). Observed by: Abraham (Ge 12:7-8; 13:3-4; 18:19), Joshua (Jos 24:15), Job (Job 1:5), David (Ps 101:2). Manifested in observance of religious rites (Ge 17:12-14; 35:2-4, 7; Lk 2:21; Ac 10:2, 47-48; 16:15; 16:25-34; 1Co 1:16), in religious instruction of children (Dt 4:9-10; 11:19-20), in household consecration (Dt 12:5-12; Jos 24:15; Ac 10:1-2; 18:8).

FELLOWSHIP Of the Righteous: In brotherhood (Lev 18:19; 1Sa 23:16-18; Mt 23:8; Jn 13:34-35; 15:17; Ro 14:1-4, 10, 13-21; 1Co 1:10; 12:13; 13:19-20; Gal 6:10; Eph 2:14-21; 5:30; 1Th 4:9-10; Heb 13:1; 1Pe 1:22-23). In worship (Ps 55:13-14; 1Co 10:16-17; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). In unity of purpose (Ps 119:63; 133:1-3; Am 3:3; Mal 3:16; Jn 17:11, 21-23; Ac 1:14; 2:1, 42, 44-47; Ro 15:6-7; 1Co 1:10; Php 1:3-6, 27-30; 2:1-4; Col 2:2; 1Pe 3:8-9). In ministry (Mt 20:25-28; Mk 10:42-45; Lk 22:32; Ac 20:34-35; Ro 1:12; 15:1-7; Gal 6:2, 10; 1Th 4:18; 5:11, 14; Heb 3:13; 10:24-25; 1Pe 2:17; 1Jn 3:14; 4:7-8, 11-13). Exemplified (Gal 2:9)

GOD: Immutable:(Nu 23:19-20; 1Sa 15:29; Ps 102:27; Isa 40:28; Jas 1:17). In purpose (Job 23:13; Ps 33:11; Pr 19:21; Ecc 3:14; 7:13; Isa 31:2; Heb 6:17-18). In faithfulness (Ps 119:89-91). In mercy (Isa 59:1; Hos 13:14; Mal 3:6; Ro 11:29).

GOD Providence of: (Ge 24:7, 40-50, 56; 26:24; Lev 26:4-6, 10; Dt 8:18; 11:12-15; 15:4-6; 32:11-14; 1Sa 2:6-9; 1Ki 11:1; 1Ch 29:14, 16; Ps 23:1-6; 34:7, 9-10; 71:6-7, 15; Ps 107:1-43; 127:1-5; 136:5-25; 144:12-15; 147:8-9, 13-14; Pr 16:33; Ecc 2:24; 3:13; 5:19; Isa 46:4; 51:2; 55:10; Eze 36:28-38; Joel 2:18-26; Mt 5:45; Ro 8:28; Jas 4:15). In providing for temporal necessities (Ge 1:29-30; 2:16; 8:22; 9:1-3; 28:20-21; 48:15-16; 49:24-25; Ex 16:15; Lev 25:20-22; Dt 2:7; 7:13-15; 8:4; 10:18; 28:2-13; 29:5; Ru 1:6; Ne 9:24-25; Job 5:8-11; 22:18, 25; Ps 36:6-7; 37:3, 19, 22, 25, 34; 65:9-13; 67:6; 85:12; 104:10-15; 111:5; 136:25; 145:15-16; Isa 43:20; 48:21; Jer 5:24; 27:6; Hos 2:8; Jnh 4:6; Zec 10:1; Mt 6:26, 30-33; 10:29-31; Lk 12:6-7, 24-28; 22:7; Jn 6:31; Ac 14:17; 2Co 9:10). In sending prosperity (Ps 75:7; 127:1-2; Isa 48:14-15; 54:16-17; Eze 29:19-20). In sending adversity (1Sa 2:6-9; 2Sa 17:14; Ps 75:7; Ecc 3:10). In saving from adversity (Ge 7:1; Ex 9:26; 15:26; 23:25-26; Ps 103:3-5; 116:1-15; 118:5-6, 13-14; 146:7-9; Da 6:20-22). In delivering from enemies (Ge 14:20; Ex 3:17; 6:7; 14:29-30; 23:22; 34:24; Dt 20:4; 23:14; 30:4, 20; 31:3, 8; 2Ki 20:1; 2Ch 20:3-30; 32:8; Eze 8:22-23; Ps 18:17, 27; 44:1-3; 61:3; 78:52-55; 97:10; 105:14-45; Ac 7:1; 12:1-12; Pr 16:1). In thwarting evil purpose (Ge 37:5-20, w 45:5-7 & Ps 105:17 & Ac 7:9-10; Ex 14:4; Nu 23:7-8, 23, w 22:12-18; 24:10-13; Eze 5:5; Ne 6:16; Est 7:10, w 6:1-12 & 9:25; Job 5:12-13, w Isa 8:9-10; Ps 33:10; Ac 5:38-39). In turning the curse into blessing (Dt 23:4, 6; Php 1:12, 19). In exalting the lowly (2Sa 7:8-9; 1Ch 17:7-8; Ps 68:6; 113:7-8). In leading people to repentance (Am 4:7-12). In punishing evildoers (Dt 2:30; Jos 10:10-11, 19; Jdg 9:23-24; 1Ch 5:26; Isa 41:2, 4). In punishing rulers (Da 5:18, 22). In punishing nations (Dt 9:4-5; Job 12:23; Eze 29:19-20). In ordaining instruments of discipline (Isa 13:3-5). In using the Gentiles to execute **his purpose** (Ezr 6:22; Isa 44:28; 45:1-6, 13). In fulfilling prophecy (1Ki 12:15; 2Ch 10:15; 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1; Ac 3:17-18). In nature (Job 12:7-20; 37:6-24; 38:25-27, 41; 39:5-6; Ps 104:16-19, 24-30; 135:7; Jer 10:13; 51:16; 14:22; 31:35).

*Instances of--*Saving Noah (Ge 7:1; 2Pe 2:5). The call of Abraham (Ge 12:1). Protecting Abraham, Sarah, and Abimelech (Ge 20:3-6). Deliverance of Lot (Ge 19). Care of Isaac (Ge 26:2-3), of Jacob (Ge 31:7). The mission of Joseph (Ge 37:5-10; 39:2-3, 21, 23; 45:7-8; 50:20; Ps 105:17-22). Warning Pharaoh of famine (Ge 41). Delivering the Israelites (Ex 3:8; 11:3; 13:18; Ac 7:34-36). The pillar of cloud (Ex 13:21; 14:19-20). Dividing the Red Sea (Ex 14:21). Delaying and destroying Pharaoh (Ex 14:25-30). Purifying the waters of Marah (Ex 15:25). Supplying manna and quail (Ex 16:13-15; Nu 11:31-32). Supplying water at Meribah (Nu 20 7-11; Ne 9:10-25). Protection of homes while at feasts (Ex 34:24). In the conquest of Canaan (Ps 44:2-3). Saving David's army (2Sa 5:23-25). The revolt of the ten tribes (1Ki 12:15, 24; 2Ch 10:15). Fighting the battles of Israel (2Ch 13:12, 18; 14:9-14; 16:7-9; 20:15, 17; 22; 23; 32:21-22). Restoring Manasseh after his conversion (2Ch 32:12-13). Feeding Elijah and the widow (1Ki 17; 19:1-8). In prospering Hezekiah (2Ki 18:6-7; 2Ch 32:29), and Asa (2Ch 14:6-7), and Jehoshaphat (2Ch 17:3, 5; 20:30), and Uzziah (2Ch 26:5-15), and Jotham (2Ch 27:6), and Job (Job 1:10; 42:10, 12), and Daniel (Da 1:9). In turning the heart of the king of Assyria to favor the Jews (Ezr 6:22). In rescuing Jeremiah (La 3:52-58; Jer 38:6-13). Restoration of the Jews (2Ch 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1). Rescuing the Jews from Haman's plot (Esther). Rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Ne 6:16). Warning Joseph in dreams (Mt 1:20; 2:13, 19-20), and the wise men of the east (Mt 2:12-13). Deliverance of Paul (2Co 1:10). Restoring Epaphroditus (Php 2:27). Banishment of John to Patmos (Rev 1:9).

*Mysterious and Misinterpreted--*The silence of God (Job 33:13). The adversity of the righteous (Ecc 7:15; 8:14). The prosperity of the wicked (Job 12:6; 21:7; 24:1; Ps 73:2-5, 12-17; Ecc 7:15; 8:14; Jer 12:1-2; Mal 3:14-15). Likeness in the lot of the righteous and the wicked (Ecc 9:2, 11). Permitting the violence of the wicked toward the righteous (Job 24:1-12; Hab 1:2-3 11, 13-14).

PREDESTINATION [G4633]. According to the purpose of grace (Ex 33:19; Isa 44:1-2, 7; Mal 1:2-3; Ac 13:48; Ro 8:28-30, 33; 9:11-29; 11:5, 7-8 1Co 1:26-29; Eph 1:4-5, 9-11; 3:11; 2Th 2:13; 2Ti 1:9; Tit 1:1-2; 1Pe 1:2, 20). Of prosperity to Abraham (Ge 21:12; Ne 9:7-8). Of Joseph's mission to Egypt (Ge 45:5-7; Ps 105:17-22). Of Israel as a nation (Ge 21:12; Dt 4:37; 7:7-8; 10:15; 32:8; 1Sa 12:22; Ps 33:12; 135:4). Of Ishmael as a nation (Ge 21:12-13; 25:12-18). Of famine in Egypt (Ge 41:30-32). Of judgment to Pharaoh (Ex 9:16). Of David as king (2Ch 6:6; Ps 78:67-68, 70-72). Of Jehu's dynasty (2Ki 10:30; 15:12). Of the dividing of Solomon's kingdom (1Ki 11:11-12, 31-39; 12:15). Of mercy to the widow at Sidon (Lk 4:25-27). Of the destruction of the Canaanites (Jos 11:20), of Ben-Hadad (1Ki 20:42), of Ahaziah (2Ch 22:7), of Amaziah and the idolatrous Israelites (2Ch 25:20). Acknowledged by Job (Job 23:13-14). Of agent to execute divine judgments (2Ki 19:25 2Ch 22:7; Hab 1:12). Of Jeremiah as prophet (Jer 1:4-5). Of revelation to a chosen people (Mt 11:25-26; Lk 8:10; 1Co 2:7). Of the death of Jesus (Mt 26:24; Mk 14:21; Lk 22:22; 24:26-27; Ac 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; Rev 13:8). Of Paul to the ministry (Ac 9:15; Gal 1:15-16; 1Ti 2:7). Of the times and bounds of nations (Ac 17:26). Of times and seasons (Ac 1:7). Of the standard of righteousness (Eph 2:10). Of the kingdom prepared for the righteous (Mt 25:34). Of salvation and election (Mt 20:16; 20:23; 24:22, 40; Mk 13:20, 22; Lk 10:20; 17:34-36; 18:7; Jn 6:37, 39, 44-45; 15:16, 19; 17: 6, 9; Ac 2:39, 47; 13:48; 22:14; Ro 1:6; 8:28-30, 33; 11:5, 7-8; 1Co 1:26-29; Eph 1:9-11; Col 3:12; 1Th 1:4; 2:12-13; 2Ti 1:9; Tit 1:1-2; Jas 1:18; 1Pe 1:2, 20; 2Pe 1:10). Of the wicked, to the day of evil (Pr 16:4), to condemnation (Jude 7) Of the day of judgment (Ac 17:31). *See Election.*

The Saints: Specially exhorted to (Zep 2:3). Desirous of (Job 5:8). Purpose, in heart (Ps 27:8). Prepare their hearts for (2Ch 30:19). Set their hearts to (2Ch 11:16). Engage in, with the whole heart (2Ch 15:12; Ps 119:10). Early in (Job 8:5; Ps 63:1; Isa 26:9). Earnest in (SS 3:2, 4). Characterized by (Ps 24:6). Is never in vain (Isa 45:19). Blessedness of (Ps 119:2). Leads to joy (Ps 70:4; 105:3). Ends in praise (Ps 22:26). Promise connected with (Ps 69:32). Shall be rewarded (Heb 11:6).

Of Christ: Purpose of his coming (Lk 24:46-47; Jn 6:51; 10:11, 15; 11:50-52). Reason for his coming (Ro 4:25; 5:6-8; 14:15; 1Co 1:17-18, 23-24; 15:3; 2Co 5:14-15; Gal 1:4; 2:20-21; Eph 5:2, 25; 1Th 5:9-10; Heb 2:9-10, 14, 18; 5:8-9; 9:15-16, 28; 10:10, 18-20; 1Pe 2:21, 24; 3:18; 4:1; 1Jn 3:16). See *Atonement; Jesus the Christ, Death of; Purpose of His Death; Sufferings of*.

Of God: Defined: God's purpose (2Ti 1:9, w Eph 1:9), God's plan (1Co 12:11; 2Co 1:15; Jas 3:4), God's will (Ac 27:12; Eph 1:11). The supreme rule of duty (Mt 6:10; 12:50 w Mk 3:35; Mt 26:39, 42; Mk 14:36; Lk 22:42; Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38-40; Ro 12:2; Eph 5:17). Plans of the righteous subject to (Ac 18:21; Ro 1:10; 15:32; 1Co 4:19; 16:7; Heb 6:3; Jas 4:15). "Lord's prayer" concerns (Mt 6:10; Lk 11:2). See *Agency*.

Reasons for Wanting to Know--Love for God (Jn 14:15, 21, 23-24), desire to please God (1Jn 3:). Blessings in this life (1Pe 3:10-12), rewards in the future life (1Co 3:10-15; 2Ti 4:8; Heb 10:35). Avoid discipline (1Co 3:16-17; 11:31-32; 1Pe 4:17). Good example to other believers (1Co 4:16; 1Th 1:7; 2Th 3:9; Heb 13:7). Will not be ashamed at the Second Coming (1Jn 2:28). Glorify God (1Co 10:31; Col 3: , 23; Heb 12:10; 2Pe 1:4). Obligation to know (Eph 5:15-17).

How God Reveals--Through his Word (Ps 119:105 2Ti 3:16-17). Through control of thoughts, indirectly (2Co 7:8-11; 12:7; 1Pe 1:6-7; 4:12-13; Jas 1:2-4), directly (Pr 16:1, 9; 21:1; Eph 2:13), through Satan (Job 1:12; 2:6). Through the control of circumstances (Pr 16:9; 20:24; Ac 2:23; 4:28; Eph 1:11). Until revelation is complete, through dreams (Ge 20:3, 6; 31:11, 24; 1Ki 3:5; Mt 2:12-13) and visions (Ge 15:1; Zec 1:7-8; Ac 10:10-11). Prerequisites: Spiritual maturity (Isa 55:8-9; 1Co 2:7; Eph 4:14; Col 1:9; 1Ti 3:6; Heb 5:13-14; 13:21), through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16 13-14; 1Co 2:12-14; 1Jn 2:27), through application in testings (Php 3:15; Heb 5:14; 12:7, 11; Jas 1:2-5). Yieldedness or self-denial (Ro 6:13, 19; 12:1; 1Pe 2:9; Rev 1:6), discipleship (Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23). Desire to know God's will (Jn 7:17), to do it (Mk 4:24-25; Ac 10:22, 35, 44, 47; 1Jn 2:11). Willingness to obey daily (Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23; Ro 6:16; Php 2:13; 2Pe 2:19). Faith (Ps 37:5; Pr 3:5-6; Ro 14:23; 2Co 5:7; Php 2:13; Heb :17, 27). Patience (Ps 37:7; Jas 1:5-6). Common sense (Tit :12). Peace of God (Col 3:15). A clear conscience (Ro 14:23).