



INLIGHT
CONSULTING

Finding Our Purpose in Surrender to His Reign

Spiritual Exercise

³ Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

⁴ Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.

⁶ He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.

Psalm 37:3-6

The 37th Psalm contains an abundance of promises to the man that trusts in the Lord. Here, near the beginning, we again see His way toward joyful, Spirit-filled ministry. There are requirements: Trust, delight, and commitment; but the promises are well worth the investment. Let us prayerfully choose to invest in the kingdom purposes of God.

Prayer

Introduction

Finding purpose in life is one of man's greatest pursuits. It is a part of our DNA. Regrettably, we seek to find purpose in many of the wrong places. Don't misunderstand; it's not necessarily because all these places are wrong. Many are quite noble – work, family, church, service.

The problem lies the origins of our search for purpose (and in the consequential motivations and measures). If our purpose begins with our work, then we will become performance driven and prideful. If it begins with our relationships, we will become controlling and self-indulgent. Even service toward others – if it is the source of our purpose – will result in people-pleasing codependence.

For our purposes to be right and virtuous, they must originate in the One that has ordained and orchestrated them. The truth is: Purpose is not found in a "place", but in a person. Only God is the source of the purposes that are good, praiseworthy and worthwhile. Therefore, it is critical that we discover God's purposes for each season of our lives.

God's purposes must be searched out; and **searched out with Him.** For the next three weeks, we will be encouraged to ask God for revelation and understanding in light of the preparations He has made for us in the areas of desire, fellowship, and role. Later, we will consider abilities and gifts. Think of these perspectives as points of triangulation on a map, or lenses incrementally added to a microscope or telescope (to empower a clearer view). Together they bring understanding to our purpose.

Re-establishing His reign is one of God's greatest pursuits. It is part of His DNA. As we mentioned last time, the first step in the journey towards joyful, Spirit-filled ministry is our surrender to the purposes of God for this season of our lives. This is no coincidence. It is a big part of His master plan. Similar to last week, when we discovered that the power of prayer is dependent on proper relationship with Him, we will now search out the connection between Him giving us the desires of our hearts and His reigning there.

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Our surrender must be complete; for in it God re-establishes another thing that was lost in the Garden – His reign in the hearts of men. Out of His reign, God then reveals the desires of our hearts. In this surrendered state, we are positioned to receive all that God has purposed for our lives.

Definition

Kingdom (*basileia*): royal power, kingship, dominion, rule (not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom; of the royal power of Jesus as the triumphant Messiah; of the royal power and dignity conferred on Christians in the Messiah's kingdom); [secondarily] a kingdom, the territory subject to the rule of a king; used in the N.T. to refer to the reign of the Messiah.

Purpose (*prosthesis*; *Greek*); a setting forth of a thing, placing of it in view, the showbread (“bread of faces”, in the tabernacle, showing the offer and necessity of fellowship with God)

Searching Out the Matter

(All Scripture references, but those noted, are NKJV; Thomas Nelson, Inc.; footnotes excluded)

Reign

Surrender is easier when we understand the Gospel of the Kingdom, its place in the Story, and our place in it.

Gospel of the Kingdom

¹⁴ Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” Mark 1:14-15

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Matthew 4:23

⁴² Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; ⁴³ but He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.” Luke 4:42-43

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Acts 8:12

So when they had appointed him [Paul] a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. Acts 28:23

Also Matthew 9:35; 10:7; 24:14; Luke 8:1; 9:2, 6, 11; 10:9; and Acts 1:3; 8:12; 19:8; 20:25

The primary meaning of kingdom is “rule”, or “reign”. The Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus came preaching is the Good News of the Reign. Three points here: First, Jesus began preaching the Gospel – and had the disciples do the same – well before He discussed His death, burial and resurrection. Second, it is more about Him than it is about us – His good news, His kingdom, His reign. Therefore, and third, the Gospel is much bigger than most have been taught. While our salvation is of foremost importance, it is only part of the Gospel message.

It is also important to note that Christ is the One Who Reigns:

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²⁴ Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.
1Corinthians 15:24-25

... ¹⁹ and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:19-23

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.
Acts 2:36

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"
Revelation 11:15

This Jesus – our Savior – is the Christ (Anointed) Lord of the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, Scripture tells us that this kingdom is an entirely new creation.

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
Isaiah 65:17

So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
Matthew 19:28

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
2Corinthians 5:17

¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.
Galatians 6:15

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
2Peter 3:13

¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."
Revelation 21: 1-5

These verses beg the question, "Has the Kingdom come or is it coming?" It is both. Christ came to establish the spiritual beginnings of the physical kingdom that He will eventually compete. This is good news for us in that we get to participate, in the power of His Spirit, in the restoration of His Kingdom.

Those of us that are alive and in Christ at this time in history are truly blessed. These are exciting strategic times. It is critical that we understand the general purposes of the Kingdom of God, and find the specific ones that He has given to each of us.

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With this in mind, let's look at a few passages that speak to God's purposes. As you read these, listen carefully to the Spirit. He may impress you specifically with one or two of them. First, there is Christ's announcement of His purpose.

¹⁶ So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ "*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.*"

²⁰ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."
Luke 4:16-21

These purposes did not end with His ascension. He left specific instructions that we were to continue in them.

Next, notice the parallels between Christ's Kingdom announcement and God's description of the true fast:

⁶ *Is this not the fast that I have chosen:*

To loose the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the heavy burdens,
To let the oppressed go free,
And that you break every yoke?

⁷ *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;
When you see the naked, that you cover him,
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?*

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
And your righteousness shall go before you;
The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'

Isaiah 58:6-9

Finally, we can find a number of God purposes in the reasons Christ left the five-fold ministry as a gift to the church:

¹¹ And He Himself [Christ] gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom

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the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:11-16

In summary, let's consider that God is establishing His Kingdom as a new creation that is ruled by His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. As King, Christ has a number of purposes that He invites us to participate in by putting the desires in our hearts to do so. We can be sure that there is a desire in our heart for every command of Christ found in the Gospels. As we surrender to these desires, they become purposes in our lives. Not just our purposes, but the purposes of God – and this makes all the difference.

Purpose

The Bible has much to say about purpose. Here are a few interesting verses:

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven... Ecclesiastes 3:1

Every new season in the lives of every follower of Christ has a purpose.

[God] who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began... 2 Timothy 1:9

These purposes belong to God. They are given to us – along with the necessary grace – before the beginning of time.

But indeed for this purpose I have raised you (Pharaoh) up, that I may show My power *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. Exodus 9:16

God uses both good and evil people to accomplish His purposes.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28

Find His purpose for this season of your life and all things (past, present and future; good and bad) will work together for your good. What an amazing promise!!

I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. Job 42:2

No matter how bad it looks, once we are in God's purpose, we can be assured and believe that it will come to pass.

The Benefits of Purpose

Discovering God's purpose for a particular season of our lives begins by wiping the slate clean, even putting aside the things you "know" God is calling you to do. This is an intentional "letting go". It is an offering to God. The immediate result is the liberty to hear God without presumption; knowing that what we hear is God speaking.

There are at least three long term benefits:

1. The continued affirmation of the call. We are never found guessing about the Lord's purpose for our lives.
2. The enhanced ability to see all God is doing to manifest His purpose. God wants us to be full participants in the work He is accomplishing in and around us.

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3. God rewards our surrender with a deeper understanding of His heart – something beyond blind faith.

Together, these three benefits represent the “spirit of wisdom and revelation” found in Paul’s first prayer for the Ephesians beginning in verse 15 of chapter 1.

This understanding includes the positioning of our purpose in His bigger picture. When the going gets tough, we can rest in the fact that God is in control and put our faith in His promises – like those found in Psalm 37 and Romans 8:28.

Getting clear and settled on God’s purpose also protects us from ourselves, because His purpose is more about Him than it is about us. It is about giving Him the glory. It is about agreeing with Jesus’ prayer for unity. It is about obeying His command to make disciples, teaching them to observe all He has commanded.

Included in these (and other) “general” purposes is the special burden Christ has determined to share with each of us – our purpose. It’s a gift that invites intimate relationship. Ministering with a well-anchored understanding of God’s purpose protects us from becoming proud when things go well. It protects us from grabbing at, or distracting from, His glory.

Finally, knowing God’s heart in the purpose has the added benefit of leading us deeper into eternal life:

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 1John 5:20

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. John 17:3

Purpose or Plan?

The purpose and the plan are not the same thing. In the simplest terms, the purpose is what God would have you do, and the plan is how He will accomplish His purpose with and through you. It is important to keep the purpose and the plan separate, but synchronized. It is important to continually test the plan against the purpose. The purpose is a safer place because it requires surrender – an intentionally weak position; where the plan requires effort and decision – two things we can subconsciously subvert from God.

We will talk more about the plan in the future. For now it’s good to know that God usually reveals enough of the plan for us to discover the sacrifice and trust that will be required. Jesus’ command to “count the cost” becomes real to many for the first time, when we discuss the plan.

Be Careful in Your Approach

Man’s ways of discovering God’s will for our lives have infected the church. For example, a well-known Christian author wrote the following:

“God has created every person with a purpose. But not everyone discovers what that purpose is. To find out, get to know yourself – your strengths and weaknesses. Look at your opportunities. Examine where God has put you. Then seek His counsel. He will give you a vision for your life.”

The author seems to suggest that finding God’s purpose begins with seeking to know yourself. A much more profitable approach would be seeking to know God’s counsel. We can do this by humbly recognizing the limits of our knowledge and understanding; and pursuing His (being soft towards Him). Again this is an exercise in surrender – putting us in a place to both hear His voice and find Him in the exploration.

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Assignment

Keep in mind that the process is not the key. The key is in the communication. The most important thing about this exercise is spending time with God, asking Him questions that He is eager to answer. It is about fellowship with the One that has been orchestrating events and processes to bring you (and those around you) into this season. There are no coincidences for God's children; and He does not intend for His children to be blind to His purposes and plans.

1. Review the Bible passages for this week. Share at least one of the concepts with someone you are discipling.
2. Each day this week, ask the Lord to show you the purposes you have assumed. Set these aside.
3. Intentionally surrender (verbally to God) to the general purposes He has for all Christians. These include:
 1. Existing for His glory;
 2. Agreeing with Jesus for Unity;
 3. Disciple-making; and,
 4. Others He will bring to your attention.
4. Ask God to show you the desire/burden He wants to share with you. Ask Him to break your heart for what breaks His.
5. Make spiritual exercises of the following devotions. Turn to the Father (relationally), surrender to the truth He has for you in it, and then listen for His voice as you read it. Speak to Him out of a thankful heart. Notice the desire in your heart for this communion with Him.

Devotion

From Os Hillman TGIF: Discovering Your Purpose

If you are going to discover how God wants to use your life and work, you must know why you were created. If you start trying to determine your purpose in life before understanding why you were created, you will inevitably get hung up on the things you do as the basis for fulfillment in your life, which will only lead to frustration and disappointment.

First and foremost, God created you to know Him and to have an intimate relationship with Him. In fact, God says that if a man is going to boast about anything in life, "boast about this: that he understands and knows me" (Jer. 9:24). Mankind's relationship with God was lost in the Garden when Adam and Eve sinned. Jesus' death on the cross, however, allows us to restore this relationship with God and to have an intimate fellowship with Him. The apostle Paul came to understand this when he said, "I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself" (Phil. 3:10, THE MESSAGE).

Establishing this relationship with God is vital to understanding your purpose. If you don't have this relationship with God, you will seek to fulfill your purpose out of wrong motives; such as fear, insecurity, pride, money, relationships, guilt, or unresolved anger. God's desire is for you to be motivated out of love for Him and to desire to worship Him in all that you do. As you develop your relationship with God, He will begin to reveal His purpose for your life. "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord" (Jer. 29:11).

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From Rob Streetman, inLight Adventure Blog

God has not left us to our own devices to understand the desires that He has for us. He has been orchestrating events for a very long time so that we would discover what He wants to give us in this very season! Why would we consider for even a moment that He would not do all in His power to manifest these very desires?

It is so very important that we receive the faith that He has given us. It is a faith proportional to the sum of every desire. It is the faith of Christ!!

Of course, these desires are not necessarily for us. They are primarily for His Name sake, His glory and His kingdom. Beyond that, they may be for our children's future, our neighbor's salvation, our spouse's spiritual strength or for a thousand other people.

Having said that, let me tell you what gets me up in the morning (literally). Every desire is also very much about us. What can I say? It is a wonderful, amazing mystery. Now don't miss this:

The desires that He gives us are absolutely and directly out of the desires of His own heart!!

Read that at least one more time. Read it in light of your strongest desire. He not only put it there, but He shares it with you. I ask again: Why would we consider for even a moment that He would not do all in His power to manifest these very desires?

You might be wondering if this could possibly be true. Why me? Why now? The answer can be found in the hidden meaning of the condition for the promise:

"Delight yourself also in the LORD..."

You see, the Hebrew word translated as "delight" has a special meaning in the 37th Psalm. It is not the *chaphets* (to take pleasure in) that is found in the other Psalms. It is *anag* (to be soft, delicate or dainty). It is an effeminate word in the Hebrew language.

Do you see it? It is the definition of the Bride's heart toward the Bridegroom – soft, delicate and surrendered. It is the Bride trusting her Husband King with all Her heart, mind, soul and strength. This sharing of His desire is the way in which He woos us and melds our heart into His. Yes, it is the melding of two hearts in the most intimate love we will ever know.

And so I encourage you: Find the time to be softly surrendered before your Bridegroom. Let Him show you the desires of your heart, and His, for this season of your life. Recognize that these are the desires that were put in you before the foundations of the earth. Surrender and He will give you the desires of your heart. He will include all the faith and courage you need to take the adventure with Him. And in the process, you will find a love for Him that you could never have imagined.

Dream with Him! Dream big!! He is the Dream Giver!!!

Your servant and His beloved,

Rob