



JANUARY 2018

PORTLAND CENTRAL NAZARENE CHURCH

January 2018 : Purpose

Do you know where you are headed in life and what next steps you need to take to get there? God has a purpose for all of us, but not all of us are living life on purpose. Join us in January as we discover God's purpose and develop a plan to begin living it.

I am so excited for you to take this step in your relationship with God. We all need some direction in life and I believe God is just waiting to give it to us so we can live the life He created us to live.

I love the quote from Andy Stanley, “Everyone ends up somewhere. But few people end up somewhere on purpose.”

No one likes to get lost, which is why having a GPS on your phone is one of my favorite achievements of modern technology. I remember a time when I first moved from my parent’s house and out on my own. I moved 16 hours away to a city (Kansas City) I knew nothing about. I got lost all the time! My dad had a map at home and when I was driving around lost I would call him and he would help get me where I needed to be.

Don’t live life lost – live it with direction and purpose! This guide will help you discover what God’s plan is for your life and hopefully give you some directions on how to get there.

If you would like to dig even deeper I recommend Craig Groeschel’s book “Chazown.” You can find it on Amazon. Many of the ideas and steps in this study guide are taken from that book. It is a good one!

You can do this study alone, but it is so much better to do it with others. So, invite your friends and family to join you!

Enjoy the journey and let me know what your purpose statement is when you are finished!

In Christ,
Pastor Matt

Purpose – Lesson 1

Why Do We Need To Find Our Purpose?

Psalm 139:13-16 (NASB)

For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.

Describe God – who is He? What are His characteristics? What is He like? What have you learned about Him from Scripture and from experience?

What are the key words/ideas in this passage about how we were created? (Read this passage in a couple different translations – like the King James, New Living, NIV, etc...).

Based on who you know God to be and how He created you what do you think the days are like that He has written/ordained for you? The days you are currently living, do you believe them to be what He intended for you? Why or why not?

God created you in much love and respect. God wants your days to be good. He wants you to have purpose and meaning (you are of great value to Him!). We need to find out what that is so we can experience all that God has for us and be who God created us to be.

Purpose – Lesson 1

How Do We Find Our Purpose?

Romans 12:1-2 (NASB)

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

When we present our bodies to God as a sacrifice we cannot hold anything back. He wants all of us. This becomes critical in our living the days God has for us and not the days we create for ourselves. Make a list of the areas of your life you have given to Him and a list of the areas you are still holding back.

What areas of your life look like God and what areas look more like the world?
How do these two lists compare?

Commit to praying daily for God to begin taking control of the areas He does not have control and pray for Him to begin transforming the areas that do not look like Him. Ask Him to begin the work of transforming and renewing your mind.

Galatians 3:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

As we move forward in this journey it must become less about us and more about Him.

Purpose – Lesson 1

Discover Who We Are In Christ

God created you to be someone special, someone with purpose. There are all kinds of things that knock us of track. So, it takes a little bit of focus and dependence on God to find our way back.

Pursuing God's purpose for our life does not mean we have to become someone that we are not. It means we have to fully embrace and become the person God has already created us to be. To do that, we need to get to know who we are a little bit better.

In the next few lessons we are going to focus on three areas of our life that will help us get a better understanding for who we are and give us a little more focus on the purpose God has for us. Think of them as three circles and where the three circles overlap, that's the sweet spot!

1. Our Past Experiences

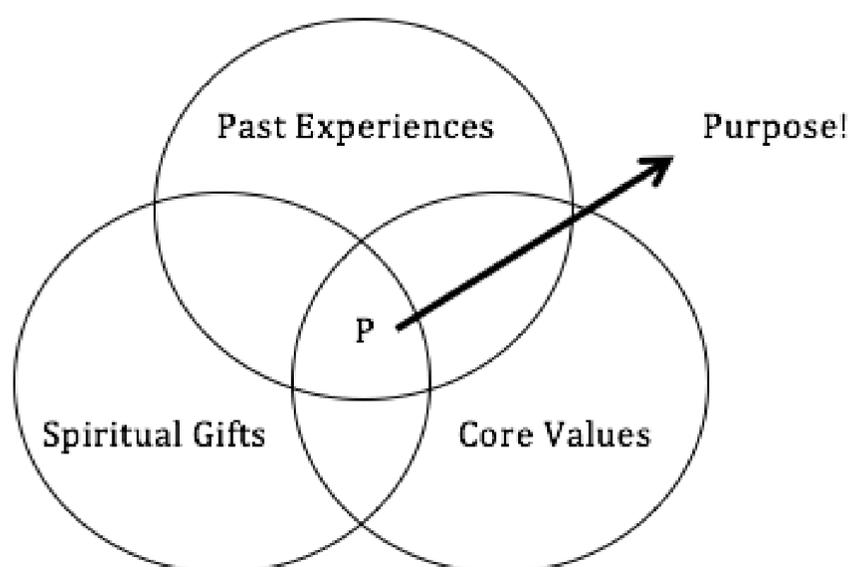
And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28 NASB)

2. Our Core Values

For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth. (2 Corinthians 13:8 NASB)

3. Our Spiritual Gifts

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly... (Romans 12:6 NASB)



Once we have discovered our purpose we should begin living it. If we don't stay on track with God and let Him be Lord over every corner of our life, then we will have a tremendous amount of trouble in living out our purpose. So, we will end our study by talking about those key areas: our relationship with God, our relationship with others, our health, our work, and our finances.

As you look back over these chapters identify at least one major life lesson from each chapter and write it down.

Major Life Lessons:

Chapter 1: _____

Chapter 2: _____

Chapter 3: _____

Chapter 4: _____

Chapter 5: _____

Chapter 6: _____

Some Questions to help you discover these life lessons:

What was God trying to teach me during this chapter or turning point of my life?

What should I remember as I move forward?

What abilities or insights has God deposited into my life as a result of this experience?

In what ways can the skills or insights God gave me through this experience impact my future? • What character traits did I develop as a result of this experience?

What character traits have I come to value most in others?

Are there any unique experiences or insights I've gained?

What are some of the ways God has used me?

Did this experience reveal anything to me about what God is like?

Congratulations! These are the things that can go into your first circle. The lessons we learn in from our past can go a long way to helping us live in God's purpose. Maybe they can help us with necessary skills for a future task.

Maybe we can use those lessons to lead someone else in the right direction.

Maybe these lessons mean there is a testimony others need to hear. Who knows how God wants to use them, but we are going to try to find out.

Begin praying for God to help you see these lessons (your past) through His eyes.

Purpose – Lesson 3

Our Core Values

2 Corinthians 13:8

For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.

In the passage surrounding this verse Paul is challenging the Corinthians to examine themselves, to make sure they are walking with Christ. This was Paul's passion, to see people live strong lives in Jesus. The truth Paul is talking about is the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection. It is what Paul based his life and ministry off of. He would not stray from it; it was His core value.

We all have some core values, passions we just cannot get away from. These values are truths we live by. Craig Groeschel (author of Chazown) says, "What you cherish at your core is what you aim at with your life." So, what do you cherish at your core?

We are going to consider our core values in this lesson. As we explore our values it is important we continue to surrender these values to God as well.

Our core values should be things that glorify and honor God, if they do not perhaps they should not be something we value.

For instance, justice would be a godly value as it is something Jesus taught.

Wealth is probably not a godly value as the Bible teaches us to not be a lover of money. So, let's examine our values and compare them to God's Word.

To begin consider these three questions:

What stirs up righteous anger inside of you?

What brings you the most happiness or joy?

When you look at your personal timeline, what core values do you see revealed in it?

Here are a few values to help get your mind thinking:

Accountability, Authenticity, Character, Compassion, Courage, Devotion, Diversity, Evangelism, Faith, Family, Generosity, Grace, Honesty, Integrity, Justice, Learning, Leadership, Mercy, Patience, Peace, Purity, Respect, Truth, Unity, Worship, Wisdom

What are your core values? (List them all)

Now, let's narrow that list down to 3 or 4 core values. Think about the following:

Which core values do you see reflected in your past experiences?

Which of these values have you displayed recently?

Which values would others say are true of you?

Which of these values come from God?

List your top 3 or 4 core values:

Congratulations! These can go in your second circle (Core Values). Spend some time prayerfully considering how these values are influencing who you are and what you do (maybe first ask, are they influencing your life?). Can you pick one that is the most important (or most valuable) to you?

Begin asking God to show you why you have these values and what He wants you to do with them.

Purpose – Lesson 4

Spiritual Gifts

We all have different talents and abilities. These are the things God has given us to use for His glory and the building up of His Church. Sometimes, we don't realize we have gifts and maybe aren't using them. Using the gifts God gave us is an essential part of living out His purpose.

To identify your spiritual gifts, start by asking yourself these questions:

What do I enjoy doing the most?

What do I do that seems to have the most impact on other people?

What do I secretly believe I can do, but I've just never tried?

What's something other people tell me I'm good at?

As you think about those things read the following passages of Scripture:

Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28-31.

Here is a list of gifts for you to consider:

The Gift of Administration

accomplishing goals by planning, organizing, and supervising others

Luke 14:28-30

The Gift of Adapting

responding to the demands of the moment even if they affect your plans

Romans 12:2

The Gift of Communication

the ability to describe, speak in public, or write ideas in a way that is easy for others to understand

James 1:19, 2 Timothy 2:16

The Gift of Compassion

being sympathetic and showing concern for those who are hurting

Ephesians 4:32, Galatians 6:2, Colossians 3:12

The Gift of Creativity

being able to easily create, build, maintain, or repair things

Exodus 28:3-4, 31:1-11, 35:30-35

The Gift of Developing or Strengthening Others

helping others reach their full potential by coaching, challenging, and guiding them

1 Timothy 5:1-2, Hebrews 3:13

The Gift of Encouragement

offering comfort, encouragement, hope, and reassurance to those who are discouraged or weak

Romans 12:6-8, Titus 1:9, Acts 11:23-24, 14:21-22, 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

The Gift of Forward Thinking

being innovative and guiding others to see changes they need to make today so that it affects their future in a positive way

1 Corinthians 14: 1-5, 24-25, 30-33, 37-40

The Gift of Praying Intently for Others

praying for extended periods on a regular basis and seeing frequent answers to prayer

Ephesians 6:18, Luke 11:1-10, James 5:14-16, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Colossians 4:12-13, Mark 11:22-25

The Gift of Giving

being generous with your resources, giving sacrificially, and cheerfully giving of your time, talents, and money without thought of being repaid

2 Corinthians 8:2-5, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, Mark 12:41-44, Mathew 6:3-4

The Gift of Hospitality

making others feel like they're at home

1 Peter 4:9-10, Romans 12:9-13, Acts 16:14-15, Luke 10:38, Hebrews 13:1-2

The Gift of Leadership

setting and communicating goals to others and helping them accomplish God's purposes for their lives

Titus 1:7-14

The Gift of Learning

being drawn to the process of learning and gaining enjoyment from it

Proverbs 1:5, 18:15

The Gift of Music

inspiring others through instrumental music, singing, dancing, or other types of performing arts

1 Samuel 16:14-23, 2 Samuel 6:14-15, 2 Chronicles 5:12-13, Psalms 33:1-3, 96:1-2, 100:1-2, 149:3, 150:1-6, Colossians 3:16

The Gift of Providing Relief

supporting people who are in a crisis and cannot provide for themselves

Proverbs 19:17, Matthew 25:35-40, Galatians 6:2, Deuteronomy 15:11

The Gift of Restoration

developing long-term relationships to support people in need

Galatians 6:1, Jeremiah 30:17

The Gift of Sharing Christ

sharing the gospel of Christ with others in an inspiring, easy-to-understand way

Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 2:36-40, 8:5-6, 14:21, 8:26-40, 2 Timothy 4:5

The Gift of Teaching

explaining truth and applying it effectively so others can understand and learn

Hebrews 5:12-14, Acts 18:24-28

The Gift of Wisdom

sorting through opinions, facts, and thoughts in order to determine what solution would be best for themselves and others

James 3:13-18, 2 Chronicles 1:7-11, Acts 6:3-10, 1 Corinthians 2:6-13, 1 Kings 3:16-28

What are your spiritual gifts (you could have more than one, but find your top 3)?

If you are one who likes to take online tests you can give www.giftstest.com a try.

Congratulations! These are the gifts you can write in your third circle (Spiritual Gifts). So, are you using your gifts? If you are, how? If you are not, why not?

Ask God to show you where to best apply these gifts for His purpose.

Purpose – Lesson 5

Purpose Statement - God has created me for a purpose, and I think that purpose might be...

Bring The Circles Together

Now, take a look at all three circles. Do you see where they overlap? Consider your experiences, your values, and your gifts – do you see a place where all three can come together to serve one purpose? Sometimes this step requires involving other people. Brainstorming and talking things through with others is incredibly helpful.

As you take a look at this consider these questions:

Looking at where my past experiences, core values, and gifts and abilities overlap, what do they have in common?

Is there something specific I feel like God is calling me to do, either starting now or sometime in the future?

Can I see a greater sense of purpose in my daily life as it is right now in this season?

Once you have taken some time to process all of this you can write out your purpose statement. This statement needs to be just one sentence, short and sweet. It is meant to be easy to remember and something that will move you to action.

Keep these things in mind as you write your purpose statement:

Your purpose will probably seem kind of broad at first.

Don't feel like your purpose has to be perfect on your first try.

Your purpose can be anything.

Your purpose will not write itself.

Here is a simple formula that can help in your writing your purpose statement:

ACTION + WHO + HOW = PURPOSE.

Here are some examples of purpose statements that might help you in writing yours:

To live free and lead others to freedom.

To train children to become uncompromised disciples of Christ.

To passionately encourage others to recognize the gifts that God has given them, so they believe in themselves.

To develop the talents of my coworkers to their fullest extent by identifying and helping meet their developmental needs.

What is your purpose statement?

God has created me with a purpose and I think it might be _____

Now, that you have a purpose statement it is time to start living it out (if you're not already).

What can you do to keep your purpose in front of you all the time?

How are you living out this purpose right now? If you are not living it out right now, what is keeping you from it?

What new skills or relationships do I need to seek out?

Is there a place at church where I can serve that might help you to live out your purpose?

Consider the answer to these questions. What are the next 2 or 3 steps you are going to take to begin living out your purpose? The next page is a smart goal work sheet, it is always helpful to set some goals.

SMART Goals:

Specific: Have you narrowed your focus?

Measurable: Can you measure your goals?

Attainable: Is the goal realistic?

Relevant: Is this the best place for you to focus right now?

Time-bound: When will you have your goal completed?

Goal #1

What is the goal or step (be specific): _____

Measurable (how will you know when you have achieved your goal): _____

Attainable (is this goal realistic): _____

Relevant (is this the best place to start – why or why not): _____

Time Line (when will you have this completed): _____

Who will hold you accountable: _____

Goal #2

What is the goal or step (be specific): _____

Measurable (how will you know when you have achieved your goal): _____

Attainable (is this goal realistic): _____

Relevant (is this the best place to start – why or why not): _____

Goal #2 (continued)

Time Line (when will you have this completed): _____

Who will hold you accountable: _____

Goal #3

What is the goal or step (be specific): _____

Measurable (how will you know when you have achieved your goal): _____

Attainable (is this goal realistic): _____

Relevant (is this the best place to start – why or why not): _____

Time Line (when will you have this completed): _____

Who will hold you accountable: _____

Purpose – Lesson 6

Key Life Areas

Once we think we have discovered our purpose and have created some goals/steps to start living in that purpose it takes commitment and devotion to stay there. Life is still full of distractions and temptations that can pull us away from that purpose. So, there are some key areas in our life that we need to make sure stay under God's authority and His control.

Finances

Proverbs 3:9

Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce;

What we have financially in this life is a gift from God and should be used to honor Him. It matters how we take care and use the financial blessing God gives us.

In what ways are you being a God honoring steward?

How can you become a better steward?

What are some next steps you will take to grow in your stewardship and to stay focused in this key area?

A great place to start is attending Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University.

Work

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

Like it or not, we all have to work. It is tempting to separate our work from our spiritual life. This cannot be if we are going to live in God's purpose. For many of us work is a key place in which we get to live in His purpose. We need to stay focused in this area and not let our work get away from us or from God.

How are you honoring God in or through your work?

Is your work distracting you from living God's purpose? Why or why not?

How can you start living in God's purpose at work?

What are some next steps you can take to begin honoring God more at work?

Health

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

It really does matter how we treat our bodies. If we are not in good health it is difficult to live in God's purpose. There are some aspects of our health that are beyond our control, but there are also many aspects of it that are in our control.

We have a say in what goes into our body, how we treat our body, and what we do with our body. Our physical lives are a gift from God, let's treat these gifts with love and respect.

What are some good healthy practices that you already have?

What are some things that you currently do that are not healthy or respectful of your body?

What are some next steps you can take to glorify God in your body even more?
(Like exercise, change eating habits, stop unhealthy behaviors, etc...)

Relationship With Others

Ephesians 4:2-3

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Before Jesus went to the cross He took time to pray for us (all future believers). He prayed for unity, that we would all stand as One in fellowship with the Father. God created us to be in relationship with each other and with Him. I would venture to say that all of our purpose statements involve other people in some way. A relationship with others is something we cannot get away from. We engage with other people all day long every day. So, it matters how we engage in those relationships.

In the passage above what are some expectations Paul places on our relationships?

Of the qualities and expectations Paul mentions, what are some areas you need to grow in?

Can you list a relationship or two in your life that is not honoring God? Is there a step you can take to move that relationship into a more God honoring direction?

Moving forward, how will you maintain godly relationships with those around you?

Relationship with God

Matthew 22:37

And He [Jesus] said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

Of all these areas mentioned keeping a growing and healthy relationship with God is the most important. If we do not have a healthy relationship with God all the other keys areas will suffer. If you were to pick a key area to start with, start here. The closer we are to God the easier it is for us to hear when He speaks to us, which means it is easier to stay focused and on track in His purpose for us. There are all kinds of things we can do to maintain that relationship – go to church, get involved in a Bible study/small group, pray, read our Bible, serve, and live in God's purpose.

Jesus mentions three areas in this passage – the heart, the soul, and the mind. How are you doing in those areas?

Heart. When the Bible speaks of our heart it is not usually talking about our physical heart, but instead it is talking of something much more. Our heart is who we are – where our character comes from, where our thoughts come from, where our emotions comes from, where our morals come from, and is where action begins. A hear out of step with God is a heart against God. How would you describe your heart right now? Is it full of God's love? Do you see your love and devotion for God flowing from your heart?

Soul. Soul is used in many different ways throughout Scripture. In some ways it is similar to heart in that it speaks of our inner self, our emotions, and especially our relationship with God. But, it can also be translated as life. Our soul is us, in every sense. It is who we are; it is our life. So, are we loving God with our life, our very sense of being? Is your life full of God's love? Can you see it in how you treat others? Is God's love and our love for Him permeating all that we are and all that we do?

Mind. Our mind is just that – our mind. It is our thoughts, our knowledge, our reasoning. In general it is our mental or moral state of being. This is a secret place for us because we do not always have to reveal what is really in our mind to others. As with everything else we want God’s love to full our mind. Is our mind in love with God? When you are in your head (thinking, reasoning, etc...) would you describe it as a mind in love with God?

As you consider these areas take time to just be still before God. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you the areas that are weakest. Ask God to show you what the next step in your relationship with Him is. What is He telling you?

What are some steps you are going to take to continue to grow in your relationship with God?

Congratulations on making it through! Lord willing you learned a little more about yourself and more about what God wants to do in you and through you. If you haven't worked through this with a group I strongly encourage you to share what you have learned with someone. The more we talk about what we think God's purpose is the more we have people holding us accountable. The more accountability means the more likely we are to actually do the things we are talking about.

When I first felt called into ministry I told people about it. I even told the atheist I worked with about it. But, I struggled actually pursuing and living in that purpose. It wasn't until my co-worker, who didn't believe in God, held me accountable that I actually began to live in it. They asked me one day why I wasn't doing what I felt God had asked me to do. It didn't make sense – if I believed in God why would I not do what He is asking me to do. So, I did it.

Find someone; tell them what you have discovered. Talk it over with them. Ask them to join you in prayer. Tell me, I would love to hear about it! Then go live in God's purpose!

Well done!

Pastor Matt

