



“Grace for a Purpose Driven Life” – Week 15

Introduction:

1. So far in our series, we covered 3 of the purposes for which we have been created:
 - **Purpose #1: You Were Planned for God’s Pleasure (bring glory to God)**
 - **Purpose #2: You Were Formed for God’s Family**
2. We’ve spent the past two weeks on **Purpose #3: You Were Created to Become Like Christ**
 - Romans 8:28-29 makes that very clear (along with Matthew 3:17)
3. Last week we studied a couple of very important truths we need to have a firm grasp of if we are going to fulfill the purpose for which God created us (becoming like Christ)!

#1: You don’t HAVE to sin – you choose to sin!

> we have the ability to choose to disobey or you can CHOOSE to please God and be Christlike.

#2: How Temptation Works – Genesis 3 (the downward spiral of temptation)

- A. Satan identifies a DESIRE inside of you (lust for what you want), then comes the . . .
 - B. DOUBT – Satan tries to get you to doubt what God has said about the sin.
 - This is why it’s so important for you to KNOW the Word of God (it removes the doubt)
 - Right behind the doubt comes the . . .
 - C. DECEPTION (the lies that get believed – especially in the area of consequences: i.e. there won’t be any if I do this! – Gen. 3:4 "You surely will not die!")
 - D. DEIFICATION of Man – Gen. 3:5 For “. . . you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
 - That’s a nice way of saying, “Who is going to be worshipped?”
 - This is the heart and soul of ALL temptation – Who is going to God? Who has earned the right to be obeyed? Who is going to be the final authority in all matters?
4. Today, we’re moving into **Purpose #4: You Were Shaped for Serving God (chp. 29-32)**
 - there is hardly a verse that states that more clearly than:
 - Ephesians 2:10 **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

[Explain the Gospel – not saved BY works, but saved FOR (the purpose of) good works – good works are the fruit on the tree or the *evidence* of salvation – not the *MEANS* by which we attain salvation!]

Input: What is the typical attitude toward the idea of a person being a *servant*?

5. If there is one concept in the NT that stands out about Christ and those who choose to follow Him, it's the reality of being a SERVANT!

- Matthew 20:25 **But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. 26 "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."**

[It would be interesting to see the rating on a *Reality TV Show* on the life of a servant!

Input: Who has modeled to you the life of a servant? When you hear the word servant, who do you think of and in what ways did they demonstrated the heart of a servant?

- One of the terms that Paul used to describe himself and those who worked with him was a 'servant'

- 1 Corinthians 3:5-6 **What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.**

- But what about YOU – are you known for being a servant? You'll never have that testimony unless you are serious about

I. Accepting Your Assignment

"You were put on earth to make a contribution. You weren't created just to consume resources—to eat, breathe, and take up space. God designed you to make a difference with your life. While many best-selling books offer advice on how to "get" the most out of life, that not the reason God made you. You were created to add to life on earth, not just take from it. God wants you to give something back." – p 227

A. You were CREATED to serve God.

- Jeremiah 1:5 **"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."**

- That's a nice way of saying, there's one reason you were born: to serve God
- Since He is the Creator, He gets to call the shots – He decides our purpose and goals
- God created man (all creation) for His own glory – one of ways to glorify God is to SERVE Him
- Samuel instructed the nation of Israel right after they made it clear that they wanted a king:
 - 1 Samuel 12:24 **Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.**

B. You were SAVED to serve God.

- 2 Timothy 1:9 **"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 granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."**

- I'll mention the verse I quoted earlier:

- Ephesians 2:10 **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

- Another term for serving God that's misunderstood by most people is the word *ministry*.

Input: When you hear the term "*ministry*"— what come to your mind?

[usually the pastors / missionaries / those in 'full-time' Christian vocational ministry!]

- while there is some degree of distinction, we ALL are 'ministers' / 'servants' of the Lord!

C. You are **CALLED** to serve God.

- 1 Peter 2:21 **For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.**

call = divine summons

- While we can narrow this down to a specific 'call' into an office of the church – we all are CALLED for this purpose . . . to follow in His steps!

- The context of 1 Peter is obedience to authority and serving the Lord no matter what happens (even persecution!!!)

Quote: **A "non-serving Christian" is a contradiction in terms.**

- How much of the time are you being useful in the service of God?

Example: In some churches in China, they welcome new believers by saying "Jesus now has a new pair of eyes to see with, new ears to listen with, new hands to help with, and a new heart to love others with."

Point: God doesn't HAVE to use you – He CHOOSES to use you!

- it's our privilege to serve Him – it's an honor to serve Him

** MAJOR POINT: It's by His *GRACE* that He calls us to serve Him!

- Listen carefully to the words of this song: *Jesus In Our Lives* (words and music by Laurie Dutton, used by permission, Copyright, Delight Music Publishing, 2004):

Verse 1

Surrounded with the comforts of life, our lives have hardly a care.
Contented with our course in life, we're blessed beyond compare.
Do we have the attitude we have what we deserve?
Or do we show our gratitude by how we serve?

Verse 2

Indifferent to the needs around, we go about our way,
Forgetful of the lives who are bound to misery and pain.
Overwhelmed and suffering, they don't know where to turn.
Who will show them Jesus and the peace they yearn?

Verse 3

Our Lord came and lived His life the way that we should live.
His mercy and compassion to us showed us how to give.
We are His ambassadors, sent from God above.

We must seek the hurting ones and share His love.

Chorus

We must be His eyes that see all the needs all around us,
We must be His ears that hear their desperate cries,
We must be His feet that go to share with them the story
They must hear the truth that stands above the lies,

We must be His hands that reach to the lost and the lonely,
Showing them the way to peace and endless light,
We must speak His Word that gives them the answers they are seeking.
We must have His heart; we must show them Jesus in our lives.

- I want to make this point very clear – a quote by Warren:

“There are no insignificant ministries in the church. Some are visible and some are behind the scenes, but all are VALUABLE (emphasis added)” – p. 230

** TAKE TIME AND THANK THE SERVANTS – choir, children’s workers, greeters, ushers, landscape people, office help, MRC, Welcome Center, etc.!

- There is another important truth to remember:

D. You are COMMANDED to serve God.

- You may be thinking: I don’t like this servant idea – I’m here for what I can GET!

Input: What is wrong with this statement?: “I’m looking for a church that meets my needs and blesses me.”

Note: To a degree, we are here to worship God, to hear truth so we can grow, but we are here to GIVE out of hearts of love for our Lord and Savior, the Lamb of God!

- The Christian life is all about MINISTRY – SERVIVING – GIVING!

“Jesus taught that spiritual maturity is never an end in itself. Maturity is for ministry! We grow up in order to give out.” – p. 231

KNOWLEDGE IS NOT THE GOAL!

- In fact, Paul warned:

- 1 Corinthians 8:1 . . . Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

“The last thing many believers need today is to go to another Bible study. They already know far more than they are putting into practice. What they need are serving experiences in which they can exercise their spiritual muscles.” – p. 231

WARNING: For those of you who have been a Christian longer, there is a danger is slacking off in your service, of getting comfortable – of thinking, “Well, I’ve served tin the past, I can let somebody else do that now!” Bad idea – very dangerous!

“God wants to use you to make a difference in his world. He wants to work through you. What matters is not the duration of your life, but the donation of it. Not how long you lived, but how you lived.” – p. 233

- You may be asking the question: How does God get me ready for all this?

II. Shaped for Serving God

“You were shaped to serve God. God formed every creature on this planet with a special area of expertise. Some animals run, some hop, some swim, some burrow, and some fly. Each has a particular role to play, based on the way they were shaped by God. The same is true with humans. Each of us was uniquely designed, or “shaped,” to do certain things.”

- All the way back to Gen. 1, we were made in the image and likeness of God
 - i.e. we have the ability to communicate, to think creatively, to do things, to demonstrate love, to serve another person (these functions take place even within the Trinity!)
- The Psalmist put it this way:
 - Psalm 139:13-14 **For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well.**
 - Psalm 139:16 **Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.**
- God never asks you to do something without giving you the ability to get it done – He even helps you get the joy done and without you, you can’t do it anyway!
- Warren uses an acrostic to remind us of how God has prepared us:

SHAPE:

Spiritual gifts / Heart / Abilities / Personality / Experience

A. SHAPE: Unwrapping Your SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- We have done a series on Spiritual Gifts, that is available on the web if want to study that
- One important point to remember: *You discover your gift AS YOU SERVE!*
- The NT doesn’t give a formula for figuring this out, Paul assumed that the people knew what gift they had because they told to deploy them, to use!
- Some people sit around trying to figure out what gift they have instead of rolling up the sleeves, getting at it, and discovering that gift AS they serve, and making appropriate adjustments

B. SHAPE: Listening To Your HEART

- This is where I would differ a bit with Warren’s explanation – the ‘heart’ in the NT is the inner man – and that inner man is guided not by mystical ‘promptings’ but by the clear instruction/teaching of Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- The Holy Spirit didn’t go to the trouble of inspiring His Word over a period of 1,500 years, with 39-40 different authors, all giving the same central message . . . to BYPASS all that for some ‘inner prompting’ (which in reality is often contrary to the clear teaching of the Word in the first place!)
- I would simply say: What do you WANT to do? What areas of service do you enjoy?

C. SHAPE: Applying Your *Abilities*

- As an image-bearer of God, your abilities are the natural talents you were born with.

Example:

- Music ability – that’s not a ‘spiritual gift’ as the NT uses the term – it’s an innate ability as an image bearer of God

Note: For some of us, the curse of sin has had more of an adverse affect and we don’t have the abilities that others have!

Example: God wanted to create the Tabernacle – God gave mechanical abilities to some!

- Exodus 31:3-5 **“And I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all *kinds of* craftsmanship.”**

- We need to remember this about our abilities:

1. All of our abilities come from God

“Even abilities used to sin are God-given; they are just being misused or abused.”

2. Every ability can be used for God’s glory for selfish reasons.

3. What I’m *able* to do, God *wants* me to do.

Example: If God hasn’t given you the ability to carry a tune, he isn’t going to expect you to be in the choir!

- 1 Peter 4:10 **As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

“Whatever you’re good at, you should be doing for your church!”

D. SHAPE: Using Your PERSONALITY

- We are all made in God’s image/likeness – but each person is different in many ways – that’s not wrong, that’s God’s creativity!

- The Bible gives us plenty of proof that God uses all types of personalities.

✓ Peter – describe him? / Paul – describe him? / Jeremiah – describe him?

Point: We NEED all kinds of personalities to balance the church and give it flavor.

E. SHAPE: Employing Your Experiences

- In determining your shape for serving God, you should examine at least six kinds of experiences from your past:

- *Family experiences:* What did you learn growing up in your family?
- *Educational experiences:* What were your favorite subjects in school?
- *Vocational experiences:* What jobs have you been most effective in and enjoyed most?
- *Spiritual experiences:* What have been your most meaningful times with God?
- *Ministry experiences:* How have you served God in the past?
- *Painful experiences:* What problems, hurts, thorns, and trials have you learned from?

- God never wastes a hurt! In fact, your greatest ministry will most likely come out of your greatest hurt.

Grace for a Purpose Driven Life
You Are a Servant! – Week 15

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Purpose #4: You Were Shaped for _____ (chp. 29-32)

Input: What is the typical attitude toward the idea of a person being a *servant*?

Input: Who has modeled to you the life of a servant? When you hear the word servant, who do you think of and in what ways did they demonstrate the heart of a servant?

I. Accepting Your Assignment

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A. You were _____ to serve God.

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Input: When you hear the term “*ministry*”— what comes to your mind?

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* **A “non-serving Christian” is a _____ in terms.**

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A. SHAPE: Unwrapping Your _____

B. SHAPE: Listening To Your _____

C. SHAPE: Applying Your _____

1. All of our abilities come from God

2. Every ability can be used for _____ or for _____.

3. What I’m _____ to do, God _____ me to do.

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- **1 Corinthians 3:5-6**

I. Accepting Your Assignment

***Quote* – p 227**

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- **Jeremiah 1:5**
- **1 Samuel 12:24**

B. You were SAVED to serve God.

- 2 Timothy 1:9
- Ephesians 2:10

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- 1 Peter 2:21 For you have been called for this purpose. . .

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- * A “non-serving Christian” is a contradiction in terms.
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They must hear the truth that stands above the lies,

We must be His hands that reach to the lost and the lonely,

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We must speak His Word that gives them the answers they are seeking.

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II. Shaped for Serving God

Quote

- Psalm 139:13-14, 16

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B. SHAPE: Listening To Your HEART

C. SHAPE: Applying Your ABILITIES

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2. Every ability can be used for GOD’S GLORY or for SELFISH REASONS.

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