

ignorant in many areas of life. It is only a question of what area of knowledge and wisdom have we chosen to pursue to understand. God gave Solomon the privilege of one request being granted. Solomon could have chosen all manner of material desires and ambitions. Instead he asked for wisdom. He made wisdom the principal pursuit of his life (1 Kings 3:1-15). Consequently, his kingdom became great and strong, so much so that Jesus made reference to the exceeding greatness of its glory (Matt. 6:29). I believe God gives each of us in life the same choice or opportunity. Will we set our mind on material earthly pursuits and ambitions (receiving man's praise and rewards 1 Cor. 1:26,27) or will we *Seek First The Kingdom Of God* (receiving God's praise and rewards 2 Tim. 2:4)? Will we see our mind on things above or things below (Col. 3:1-3). Jesus spoke of a man who having found the greatest treasure anyone could ever find in a field, went and sold everything else he had to buy this field and have this treasure in his life (Matt. 13:44). That treasure is the person of Jesus Christ. Our purpose in life is to *Know Him And Make Him Known* (Phil. 1:19-25). When we truly come to know Him and the riches of His inheritance (Eph. 1:15-21), the things of this world lose their appeal to us. Paul spoke of suffering the loss of all things that he might know Christ (Phil. 3:8). Some wonder why their relationship to God is so lifeless and void of spiritual fruit. The answer is we are too attached to the things in this world. The cares of this world choke out the power of Christ's life (Matt. 13:22). The Bible says wisdom is the principal thing (Prov. 4:7). If we are honest in evaluating how we use our time and what pursuits our lives are given to, we will discover the reason for the boredom in our life. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul (Matt. 16:26).

**Spirit Beings In Physical Bodies** - Man is not a physical being with a spirit, but a spiritual being with a body. God has designed us so that the dominant pursuit of our life should be to become mighty in spirit (Luke 2:40). Ask yourself: "what value will the activities I'm involved in have 5 years from now? what profit will they bring to my life? in what way will they advance God's kingdom? do they have any eternal value?" Remember, only the life that's invested in people and God's Word has eternal fruitfulness to it. In 1st John 2:15-17 we are warned not to love the world and pursue its treasures, because of its temporal nature — "...the world passeth away, and the lust of it" (1 Jn. 2:17). Listen to the words of G. Campbell Morgan speaking of Daniel who had an "excellent spirit" (Dan. 6:3): To Daniel, it was not the king's dainties or wine from the king's table that were the principal things, but rectitude, which means life harmonizing with the infinite, the true, the eternal. The principal things in Daniel was not the physical, though he was fair, ruddy and splendid; spirit was the dominant factor in the personality of this man. Daniel was not a man who thought of himself within the physical as possessing a spirit; he thought of himself within the spiritual possessing a body. He was not a man who began life in the material, and from that circumference crushed and bruised and killed the spiritual". Is it possible in your life, God's purpose has not been fully experienced because you have chosen to make material pursuits and earthly pleasures your treasures rather than Christ?

*If you have everything life but Christ, you have nothing. If you have nothing in life but Christ, you have everything (John 15:5). Can you sing the words of the following hymn "I Am Resolved" from you heart? I am resolved no longer to linger, Charmed by the world's delight; Things that are higher, things that are nobler, these have allured my sight. I will hasten to Him, Hasten so glad and free; Jesus Greatest, Highest, I will come to thee.*

## UNDERSTANDING PURPOSE IN LIFE

*Decisions ?  
Priorities ?  
Choices ?*



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It is recorded by Paul towards the end of his life: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness... (2 Tim. 4:7,8). Paul had purpose in his life. He was aware of God's calling and plan, that to the best of his knowledge he had lived out before God. He was looking forward to God's reward because of his faithfulness in working out God's plan in his life. Jesus expressed the same sentiments just before He faced the cross: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:4,5)

**The Importance of Purpose** - I am convinced that one of the greatest reasons young people go the way of the world and waste their lives in the corruption of sinful pleasures is because they never discover God's purpose for their lives. Jesus at the age of 12 was aware of God's calling and purpose for His life. He said "...I must be about my Father's (heavenly) business..." (Luke 2:49). Either we get busy doing our heavenly father's business or we end up doing the devil's business. There are only two choices in life, two roads that all men must choose between that determine our destiny and life existence (Matt. 7:13,14). David is a classic example. The Bible tells us that when he yielded himself to the sin of adultery it was a time when kings were suppose to be going forth to war (2 Sam. 11:1). Because David the king was not diligent in pursuit of God's purpose and calling for his life the occasion for the lust of the flesh quickly presented itself and was fulfilled. G. Campbell Morgan one of the great prince of preachers in England in the last century understood the importance of purpose in a man's life: "Purpose is at the beginning of every thing. It is the matter of supreme importance. Thousands of men drift into evil courses for lack of a definite and positive committal of themselves to some position, for lack of having purpose, something settled in their hearts. Purpose in a man's life is all-important. It affords him anchorage in the time of storm, creates for him a base in the day of battle. To have committed oneself to some definite thing is always of value in every walk of life. When a man has formed his purpose he is halfway to victory. This is so with a boy who is looking forward to his life work. When he knows what his purpose is, he is halfway to victory. He is not all the way to victory. It is quite possible to have formed that purpose, yet never to reach the goal; but it is equally certain that the goal cannot be reached without purpose".

**Importance of Purpose in Warfare** - Consider what happens when men are fighting a war when the mission or purpose has not been clearly defined. The soldiers become confused, disillusioned and fainthearted. Many have suggested this type of situation existed during the Vietnam war. But when everyone knows the clearly stated mission to be accomplished, each one mobilizes in his area of responsibility to ensure the success of reaching the stated goal. How is it that amid all the great adult soldiers of the nation of Israel, not one stepped forth to answer the threats and intimidation of the Philistine giant - Goliath (1 Sam. 17:24)? Amid this fear and intimidation the youth David enters the scene and has the boldness, courage and faith to accept Goliath's challenge. The difference was his understanding of purpose. When asked about his confidence to go up against Goliath, he responded: "...is there not a cause (purpose)?" (1 Sam. 17:29). Once you've established your life purpose and have something worth dying for, then you have something worth living for.

**Advancing God's Kingdom** - Most Christians know Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you" but I wonder how many have taken the time to consider what it means to seek FIRST God's kingdom. One day I sat in the office of a lawyer. In terms of this world, he had everything going for him. He wore the latest in fashion of clothing, drove a fancy car, had a nice luxurious home, plenty of money to experience the amusements of life, prestige of his job position etc. He said to me: "Frankly, I'm bored, unfulfilled. Something is missing in my life. Somehow I don't think I've really hit the nerve center of my purpose in life" Many people in the world are just like him. They have seen all they want to see, they've gone to the places they wanted to go, they acquired all the things they felt they needed, and still there is a gnawing emptiness in their life. It's like somehow hoping that at the end of the rainbow you'll find your pot-of-gold, but it never materializes. The Bible says we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out (1 Tim. 6:7). Naked came we into this world and naked shall we return (Job 1:21). What then is our purpose in life? What is there in life that lasts for eternity? Two things last for eternity - people and God's Word (Rev. 20:12; Matt. 24:35). God's purpose for our lives is to *Advance His Kingdom* (Matt. 6:33). In the Lord's prayer we are taught to pray *Thy Kingdom Come* (Matt. 6:10). Each of us needs to ask the question: "In what way is my life advancing the kingdom of God?". In what way am I investing my life in God's Word and people (the only two things that last forever)? I like what one famous owner of a meat firm had to say: "My main purpose in life is to help others know Christ, and I pack meat on the side" Most of us have this reversed. We are investing our lives in hobbies, sports, entertainments, amusements, projects, material pursuits, houses, land, our jobs etc. and if there is any time left over for the spiritual, we pursue it. God is part of our life, but not at the core of our life. God says seek ye *First The Kingdom Of God* (Matt. 6:33). Let me hasten to add that much of our religious activity is also wood, hay and stubble (Matt. 7:21-23). In Luke 14:15-24 Jesus related the account of a man who gave a great supper bidding guests to come. The excuses given by the guests of why they couldn't come related to earthly temporal concerns. Tragically, on judgment day many will realize all the spiritual and eternal inheritance that could have been theirs, but they forfeited it by temporal concerns. Paul's occupation was a tentmaker (Acts 18:3), but the purpose of his life was to warn every man, teach every man that he might present every man perfect in Christ (Col. 1:28). He purposely limited his freedom (1 Cor. 9:19-23) and brought his body under voluntary disciplines (1 Cor. 9:24-27) so that he could influence the most amount of people to receive Christ's salvation. He didn't waste time arguing or debating the rightness or wrongness of a questionable activity (2 Tim. 2:23), he gladly limited his freedom to more effectively serve others.

**Wisdom Is The Principal Thing** - I have seen those who can tell you the history of baseball from alpha to omega. Just name a player and a year and they can give you detailed stats - who he played for, his batting average, who he was traded to, who won the world series that year etc. But, if asked a simple question about the Bible there immediately is a sense of ignorance. I've seen men who can take a car manual with all kinds of intricate instructions, measurements and difficult words, be able to understand it and apply it and become acc mechanics. But these same men confess they have a hard time understanding the Bible or confess they know very little of the Bible. Why? It's a matter of purpose, priority and pursuit. We make time for what is important to us. We are all