



Purpose – Week 1

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Purpose

Lesson 1: Purpose - More Like Him

Bible: Ephesians 4:22-24

Description: We can spend a lot of time trying to figure out what our exact purpose and calling is, asking for something specific for our lives. However, by reading the Bible, it is clear to see that our purpose is to become more and more like Jesus.

Supplies:

- Paper and markers for the group
- A picture with a lot of elements—like a room with a lot of things in it.
- A bunch of fruit (*before service, give this fruit to a leader and explain to them when you would like them to come into the room carrying all the fruit*)
- A costume for a student
- A robe

Opening Game: Copy That

Pass out paper and markers to the group. Explain that you're going to show a picture briefly, and then they have to do their best to copy it.

Show the picture (on a screen, if possible. If not, have the students pass it around and look at it) for about five seconds.

Tell the students they have two minutes to draw their best impersonation of the picture they saw. The student who copies it closest wins!

Teach

How many of you want to know what your purpose is? Well, that's what we're all here to talk about! But I think what we will be talking about may be a little different than what you're expecting.

See, when we're trying to figure out what our purpose is, we're usually searching for an answer that's very specific for our own life. For example, "My purpose is to be a teacher or a writer or a singer." You may think that your purpose is all about a career.

What if I told you that the Bible tells you what your purpose is?

Well, it does! And it doesn't have to do with a job.

Your purpose is to become more and more like God.

"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." –Ephesians 4:22-24

In this verse we see that becoming more like God doesn't just happen; it takes action. You have to actively put off your old self—the one that is more comfortable with worldly things than godly things, the one that is selfish and greedy—and put on your new self.

Can I get a volunteer?

Okay, I want you to put on this costume. We're going to say that this costume represents your old self—the one that isn't like God.

Now, we're going to pretend that this robe represents your new self, the one that's created to be like God. Go ahead and put that on over the costume.

So, you have it on, but you can still see that the costume is there, right? It shows through, it's lumpy, and it's obvious that you still have it on under your robe.

That's how it is with our old self and new self, like this verse talks about. You can't just start living the way God wants you to live and becoming more like Him without first stopping the ways you're living that aren't like Him. You can't have both; you have to take one "off" first.

In the game we played, you had to try to recreate a picture after only seeing it once and never looking at it again. Too often, that's how we try to become more

like God. We don't take the time to look at Him and His word. If we did, we'd be in a much better place!

When it comes to being more like God, and wondering how exactly how to do that, two very significant parts of the Bible help answer that question. The first is the Ten Commandments.

“You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them . . . You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God . . . Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” – Exodus 20:3-17

These commandments were left to show us how we should and shouldn't live. They mostly consist of things we should not do if we want to become more like God. We shouldn't lie. We shouldn't be jealous of others. We shouldn't worship any other God. We shouldn't murder or steal. It's a list that, if followed, will result in being more Christ-like.

When you're faced with tough decisions about what you should do—which, we all are at some point—ask yourself: How does this line up with those Ten Commandments?

Does the way you spend your weekend match up with them? Or are there more lies than truth and more time spent “worshipping” things other than God?

Living your life according to the Ten Commandments won't be easy. More often than not, you'll be the odd one out if this is the way you're living. But it's so worth it because it leads to becoming more and more like Jesus.

Here's something I want you to remember: When you choose to *not* follow these commandments, you are saying that whatever you're doing is more important than God's Word.

For example, if you decide to lie, then in that moment you are deciding that whatever you're lying about is more important than the Bible and your purpose.

Is there anything more important than that? Of course not!

While the Ten Commandments are mostly made up of things we shouldn't do, the next part of the Bible I want to talk about is made up of things we *should* do. Or, more accurately, things we should *have*.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” – Galatians 5:22-23

If you're trying to be more like God, this is the kind of fruit you should have in your life.

Now, this is one of the parts of the Bible that you may have heard a lot. When we hear the same thing over and over, sometimes we stop thinking about what these verses actually mean. So let's break it down and see what these verses really mean for you and your purpose.

Love. This is a big one. Do you want to be like God? Then you're going to need a whole lot of love. Love for Him, first of all. But then love for people, too. The Bible says that *God is love*, so in order to become more like Him, this is something you need tons of in your life.

Joy. Here's a question: If you know Jesus, why wouldn't you be full of joy? I mean, you know the One who created you, your sins are forgiven, and you get to spend forever in heaven with Him. That's worth having joy over, right?

Of course it is! But so often, we forget that. We get caught up in day-to-day struggles and we start focusing on those struggles instead of the great joy we have in Jesus.

Peace. How many of you struggle with feeling anxious? Maybe it's about homework or about your family. Whatever it is, do you know what you should do? Pray about it. It's a lot harder to feel anxious about something when you're talking to someone who is in control of everything.

When you give your problems and anxious feelings over to God, He will give you peace in return.

Forbearance. This is another word for patience, something we can be pretty bad at sometimes! Instead of patiently waiting on something, or patiently working for something, we tend to want what we want immediately. We're quick to get angry and frustrated with others instead of being patient with them.

The fact that forbearance is something that is listed right alongside love shows

how important God thinks it is. Are there areas of your life you could use more patience in? I'm guessing the answer is yes for everyone in this room, myself included!

Kindness. God wants our life to be a kind one. Once you know this, it should make deciding how to act towards others really easy—act kind! From small acts of kindness to big acts of kindness, this should be your daily way of life. Make it a goal to treat everyone you come into contact with kindly. That's a big goal, yes. But it's also a Christ-like one!

Goodness. Is your life full of things that are good? What about your thoughts? Are your actions good? Whew, that's a lot, isn't it? But your purpose is to be more like God, and to be more like God, there needs to be goodness in your life.

Faithfulness. Are you faithful to God? Are you faithful to His Word? If you're not, then this is life changing. Choosing to be faithful to God and the Bible is going to change everything in your life—and it's going to change for the better.

Gentleness. What does it mean to have gentleness in your life? Does it mean to always be soft and quiet, never standing up for what you believe? No, not at all!

Gentleness is about your actions. Think about your interactions with others—how you can judge people so quickly, how you can get frustrated and react harshly. When you act with gentleness, those interactions change. You begin to react in ways that look more like Jesus than this world.

Self-Control. Oh, boy. This is a tough one. Because on your own, without Jesus, your life doesn't reflect God at all. You're selfish, you're angry, you're unkind. And just because you accept Jesus into your heart doesn't mean that those instincts go away.

You're still going to be tempted to act in an ungodly way, and that's why self-control is so important. Without self-control, becoming more like God is impossible.

Have leader with the fruit come sit in the middle of the students while you are still talking.

Okay, you guys seem a little distracted. What are you looking at?

You're looking at _____, right? Now, let me ask you a question. What's the first thing you notice about him/her? It's all the fruit, right? You don't notice his/her hair, or the color of their shoes. You notice all the fruit they have because it's out of the ordinary to be walking around with that much fruit. And it looks good, doesn't it?

That's exactly how it is when you live with the Fruit of the Spirit in your life—other people notice. Those traits are out of the ordinary, in a good way!

The people around you are going to begin to notice you. They're going to begin to notice how your life is more Christ-like, and how different that is. And they're going to notice how good it looks!

Small Group Questions

1. Did you know that your purpose is to become more like God?
2. Do you think that God left us the Ten Commandments to help us have better lives? How?
3. Are there things about your “old self” that you need to take off? If so, what are they?
4. Do you think that trying to become more like Jesus is going to change your everyday life?
5. What fruit of the spirit do you need to work on the most this week?
6. Which commandment(s) do you have a hard time keeping?
7. Do you think that the way you live your life right now reflects Jesus?
8. If it doesn't, how can you change that?
9. Do you think that if you work on having more of those Fruits in your life, that your life will look more Christ-like?
10. Do you think that the people around you will start to notice if you work on becoming more like God? Do you think that's a good thing?

Teach Closing

So, when you're wondering what your purpose is, I bet you've never thought about the Ten Commandments or the Fruit of the Spirit, have you?

That's because when we're trying to figure out our purpose, we are expecting one specific thing—a career, a calling, a life plan, or something like that. But one thing is clear: Your purpose is to become more and more like God.

While that may seem like a big and daunting task, it doesn't have to be a confusing one! God left His word, the Bible, for you. It's full of wisdom on how to become more like Him.

The Ten Commandments and the Fruit of the Spirit are a great place to start. This week, read them and compare them to your own life.

And remember, when you practice these things, you're not just doing things like being truthful and having more love. No, you're also becoming more like God and fulfilling your purpose in the process.