

LIFE ON PURPOSE 2
“WE WERE PLANNED FOR GOD’S PLEASURE”

“You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created.”

Revelation 4:11

“His unchangeable plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure.”

Ephesians 1:5

1. I MUST CHOOSE TO _____ TO THE ULTIMATE _____ OF WORSHIP

“Give yourselves to God...Surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes.” Rom. 6:13 TEV

In order to willfully choose to surrender to the ultimate purpose of worship,
I must come to _____ God and learn to _____ God.

2. I MUST CHOOSE _____ AS THE ULTIMATE _____ OF WORSHIP

“The Lord hates cheating, but delights in honesty. Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. Good people are guided by their honesty; treacherous people are destroyed by their dishonesty.” Proverbs 11: 1-3

In order to willfully choose honesty as the ultimate posture of worship,
I must come to accept my _____, and acknowledge my _____.

3. I MUST CHOOSE _____ AS THE ULTIMATE _____ OF WORSHIP.

“I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship any other gods besides me.” Exodus 20: 2-3

In order to willfully choose God as the ultimate person and object of my worship,
I must _____ that I am not God, and _____ God without reservation.

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This morning we continue in our new series; Life On Purpose, exploring the great question each of us must ultimately answer; “What on earth am I here for?” The first answer we’ll consider is that we were Planned for God’s Pleasure.

Two things by way of introduction: One, we are not an accident. Our birth on this earth is not random; our existence is not the result of mutating cells or amoebas. From the moment God conceived the concept of creation, we became part of God’s eternal plan. Evolution, though it has some scientific merit, is more than a political, scholastic football; it is a presupposition of life that frankly, cheapens life by attempting to reduce our existence to some process devoid of a creator.

Two, God had a specific purpose for creating us. It was not because God was bored, or needed us to fulfill some lack He found within Himself. No, our purpose here is not random at all, but very specific. We were planned by God, to bring pleasure to God. And we have one primary way, one primary method, one primary means of bringing God pleasure. Do you know what that is? Yes: through worship.

Not worship narrowly defined as songs, or prayers, or even sermons, but worship that includes all we do, and not limited to what we do in church! When everything we do is an offering to God; when everything we do helps us remember God and makes us grateful to God; then everything we do can be considered worship.

Worship done the right way, can make all aspects of our lives into 'pleasing worship' for God! Bringing pleasure to God is called Worship! Join me now as we consider this God – Pleasing Worship!

1. I MUST CHOOSE TO SURRENDER TO THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP

"Give yourselves to God...Surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes." Rom. 6:13 TEV

Again, two parts. One: surrender is the primary activity and predominant attitude that must pervade and prevail in all our lives if we wish them to be considered worship. This kind of surrender can only happen when we are living vitally in a loving relationship that engenders a deep level of trust. It is hard, maybe even impossible, to willfully and willingly surrender our wills, to someone we don't know or can't trust. Reminds me of a cute story of a 5-year-old grandson and grandpa hiking in the woods. After walking leisurely for a couple hours they sit a minute on a stone. Grandpa asks grandson: "Tommy, do you know where you are?" "No, grandpa, I don't", replies Tommy. "Do you know how we got here?" grandpa prods. "No, grandpa, I don't know how we got here." "Do you have any idea how we are going to get out of here?" "No, grandpa," Tommy again responds. "Well, then young Tommy, I think you are lost!" "NO, I'm not grandpa, I'm with you."

That kind of love, that kind of trust, produces a God-pleasing surrender. We can easily trust God to lead us where we need to go, if we love Him and know Him intimately.

Secondly, we surrender to God's ultimate purpose for worship, which is not necessarily our edification, our inspiration, our fellowship, or even our being fed.

Legitimate God pleasing worship has at its core that it is not about us, but about God.

I had a Preaching and Worship professor in Seminary who continually tried to remind us that in worship the congregation are the actors, the worship leaders are the prompters, and God is the Audience! We conduct worship not primarily for what we get out of it, but for how it might be pleasing to God! That is a different way to look at it isn't it.

Saying that; "I didn't get anything out of it, or it didn't speak to me, or feed me today," says way more about us, and our attitude toward worship, than it says about worship itself. As I reminded my study group on Wed; there is nothing wrong with being fed, and blessed and enriched and revived in and through worship, but WE are not worship's primary consumers, or principle critics; God is! Because worship is ultimately not about us...its about God!

So remember this simple action step that will accompany each point today:

In order to willfully choose to surrender to the ultimate purpose of worship, I must come to **know** God and learn to **trust** God.

2. I MUST CHOOSE HONESTY AS THE ULTIMATE POSTURE OF WORSHIP

"Who may go up to the mountain of the Lord? And who may stand in His Holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not set his mind on falsehood, and has not committed perjury." Psalm 24:3-4

"The Lord hates cheating, but delights in honesty. Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. Good people are guided by their honesty; treacherous people are destroyed by their dishonesty." Proverbs 11: 1-3

I struggled to begin this section, because it really cuts to the quick, for many of us. Honesty is a value for most of us, but it is an essential element when it comes to worship. I fear that some of our expressed displeasure with various forms or styles of worship may have to do with a much deeper dishonesty than many of us are willing to admit.

It's easier to be critical of some part of worship than to reckon with what God might be saying to our hearts.

It's harder to look deep within when we are bent on looking around. It's tempting to think we've got it all together, while wondering about others and their sins. But it's wisest to come to worship as an open book, honestly admitting we are sinners, most of our lives are not perfect, and our attitudes certainly could stand some adjusting.

This is why confession is such an important element of any relationship, whether with a human or with the Divine. God knows anyway, how silly we must look to God thinking we can hide anything from him. Much better off we'd be just to lay it out there, "here I am Lord, warts and all."

We are a proud people, no matter our specific heritage, and sometimes that pride gets in our way of our worship. Rick Warren quotes A.W. Tozer in this second section of the Purpose Driven Life: "The reason why so many are still troubled, still seeking, still making little forward progress in their spiritual lives, is because they haven't yet come to the end of themselves. We're still trying to give orders, and interfering with God's work within us."

Some of us are hanging on tightly to the misconception that we have control of our lives, especially our spiritual lives. Yes, we do bear certain responsibilities, but each of those is dependent on coming to God just as we are, knowing full well, that the measure of our honesty will determine the amount God can rectify and restore us! Does that make sense?

For those who have lived guarded, and secret lives, it may look like a daunting journey to this level of openness and honesty; as with each journey, we begin with one step. I hope and pray that each of us might be empowered today to take the next step directly in front of us. For some who have yet to yield your life to Christ, honestly admit your need and your sin. For some who have worn the mask of acceptable distance long enough; step into freedom by admitting your own sin.

For some who have grown cold, and chosen to stay there, let down your defenses just a bit, to entertain a warm heart once again. For some who have willfully wandered away, come on home, it all begins with one 'honest' step. I'd say it like this:

In order to willfully choose honesty as the ultimate posture of worship, I must come to accept my **limitations**, and acknowledge my **pride**.

3. I MUST CHOOSE GOD AS THE ULTIMATE PERSON OF WORSHIP.

"I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship any other gods besides me." Exodus 20: 2-3

We've been exploring how to make our whole lives an act of worship. This step is key. Willfully choosing to acknowledge that God is the only legitimate and ultimate object of our worship is where we each must begin. That's part of the fabric God wove into His creation. Only as we worship God, will we discover what it means to be fully and completely human as God originally intended.

C.S. Lewis observed, "The more we let God take us over, the more truly ourselves we become – because He made us. He invented all the different people that you and I were intended to be...It is when I turn to Christ, when I give up myself to His personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own."

I was intrigued with Warren's discussion about how much trouble we make for ourselves and how we inhibit God's ability to see all our lives as pleasing worship; when we continue to think/feel/believe/act like we are our own gods. That attitude is commonplace in this country; shoot I heard it from both pulpits during Friday's debate! A good dose of humility and honesty wouldn't hurt either of our presidential candidates, and even saying, I don't know the answer to that question, ...but God does, would go along way. We aren't God and never will be. We are humans. It is when we try to be God that we end up most like Satan, who desired the same thing.

Every activity can be transformed into an act of worship. How? Do everything as if you were doing it for Jesus, by carrying on a continual conversation with Him while you do it, and by willfully choosing to admit, acknowledge, and affirm that God is God, and I am not! I love Eugene Peterson's translation of Romans 12:1 *"Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life – and place it before God as an offering."*

There is one way we can prove to God, and to ourselves who is the real object of our worship. By choosing to obey God, rather than ourselves. By choosing to value what God values, more than what we value. By choosing to care about the things God cares about, and to care less about the things we want. By choosing to focus our lives and our worship on God, and not on ourselves. Here is the last directive:

In order to willfully choose God as the ultimate person and object of my worship, I must **admit** that I am not God, and **obey** God without reservation

Let me conclude with one more quote from Rick Warren:

We were designed to worship God; that will bring God pleasure. And if we fail to worship God, we will create other idols to give our life to. (usually ourselves) We are free to choose what we surrender to, but we are not free from the consequences of that choice. E. Stanley Jones said, "If you don't surrender to Christ, you surrender to chaos." Surrender is not the best way to live; it's the only way to live. Nothing else works, nothing else will please God. All other approaches lead to frustration, disappointment and self-destruction.

Let us pray.