

The Jesus Trip, Ephesians: A Book on Purpose

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Recap: The Gospel Paul received from Jesus, both the revelation and its application in our lives, brilliantly weaves together how our broken identities and fallen living is healed, hearts are mended, relationships resorted, and fractured living is displaced by new life in Christ. And all this comes through the peaching of Christ and Him crucified. In a word: GRACE.

Intro: Ephesians - A Book of Purpose

Genesis is the book of beginnings, but Ephesians takes us into the eternal thoughts and desires of God.

Paul and all other apostolic and prophetic ministries, carry(ied) a special revelation and appreciation for God's purpose, His eternal plan.

Ephesians 3:4-6

As you read what I have written [in this letter], you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

Paul had unique revelation of what he referred to as God's eternal purpose:

Ephesians 3:10-11 (NLT)

God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Objective: Going to look at Ephesians as a book that talks about purpose: God's eternal purpose, and our purpose as individual people and as the church.

WHAT IS PURPOSE AND HOW DO YOU MEASURE IT?

"...stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once personally meaningful and at the same time leads to productive engagement with some aspect of the world beyond the self."¹

¹ John Templeton Foundation. *Reviewing six decades of research into the meaning, development, and benefits of purpose in life.* <https://www.templeton.org/discoveries/the-psychology-of-purpose>.

Purpose is something clear and defined, a goal that you set that is connected to your own desires and person, and it engages the people or world around you beyond yourself.

Ephesians 3:10-11 (NLT)

God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's purpose was to reveal himself, his wisdom, his glory, throughout the vastness of his whole creation to every creature, known and unknown to us, and to do this through the church. In other words, to make himself, the unknowable, unapproachable, undiscoverable God, who is impossible to grasp, too large to understand, so completely other-than, different, holy, massive, big, too radiant to be approached much less known by finite beings, to make himself knowable, to be known by his creation.

1 Timothy 6:16 (NRSV)

It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see...

God, this immensely relational person, is so big and so holy, so full of light and life than no one, no created being could ever know him unless he condescend and made himself known in a knowable way!

Ephesians says he accomplished his eternal plan already! It's a past tense thing. The knowable God has become knowable through Jesus Christ. Read Ephesians 3:10-11 again and you will see it!

Ephesians 1:22-23

And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

See the glory, the majesty, the purpose of the church, His bride!

Ephesians 1:9-10

"he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."

I hope you can see you have eternal purpose too - its through us that he will fill everything in every way, and through the church and it's revelation of Jesus that God will bring all things into Christ. He is the eternal Gospel that

will be preached on earth and in heaven, in this life and the next, in this age and in the ages to come!

So grasping this, wrestling with it, helps us to know God and live truly fruitful and fulfilling lives. From a spiritual perspective Paul prayed:

Colossians 1:9-10 (NRSV)

"...you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God."

From a secular perspective, even people who don't know God know that:

Steve Taylor Ph.D "The Power of Purpose: Why is a sense of purpose so essential for our well-being?"

"The need for purpose is one the defining characteristics of human beings. Human beings crave purpose and suffer serious psychological difficulties when we don't have it. Purpose is a fundamental component of a fulfilling life."

5 Observations About Purpose:

1. It starts with "Being!"

Remember how purpose, for it to be truly purpose and not just random activity, needs to be personally meaningful, it needs to flow from who you are.

Eph. 1:3a

"All praise to God, *the Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Eph. 1:5 (NLT)

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

Out of his Father's heart he wanted a family and so predestined our adoption through Christ Jesus to himself, and arranged that us as His children, as partakers of his very DNA and inheritance, we would be the ones that made him known... *it would be through his family because he is a father.*

So God's purpose flows from him being who he is... same is true of us. We engage our purpose first and foremost by being.

Eph. 1:4-5 (NLT)

*Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to **be** holy and without fault in his eyes.*

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

What we are created to do flows out of who he created us to be. Often times self-discovery is a holy pursuit of purpose.

2. It's in love

God is not purpose driven, but love motivated.

Eph. 1:4b-5 (NIV)

In love he predestined us"

Not out of a driven desire to achieve, to accomplish, but out of love. It's his love that makes him want to be known.

Eph. 3:17-19 (NLT)

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

How is it that Jesus will fill the church with his own fullness? It's by causing us to experientially know his love!

That why Paul says, "yea, let's do gifts, but let me show you a more excellent WAY! An eternal way! A way that will continue to propel you into eternal purpose long after the gifts are no longer needed"

1 Corinthians 12:31

"And yet I will show you the most excellent way." : LOVE!

Eph. 4:15 (NIV)

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

So what do you love and who do you love? What do you love to do, and how can it be employed for the betterment of the others that you love and care about?

3. Its Relational

God is relational.

A Canadian academic Marshall McLuhan once coined the phrase “the medium is the message.” And he was right.

God’s chosen medium, his delivery system for the revelation of who he is, is a family of children to the Father, and a Bride for His Son. It’s through the vehicle of not just people he loves, but through the relationship he has with them, that will make his wisdom known.

Relationship is the medium because relationship is also the message!

Ephesians 2:14 (NLT)

For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us.

The cross of Jesus is the ultimate unifier of people.

Its also in this book about purpose that we get some of the most amazing relationship advice for:

Marriage:

This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Eph. 5:32-33

For parenting and families:

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord...Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Eph. 6:1-4 (NLT)

For marketplace relationships:

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear... Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don’t threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites. Eph. 6:5-9 (NLT)

Eph. 6:12 (NLT)

For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

When you walk in true purpose, it clarifies who and what the true enemy is.

Lastly in regards to relationships, we have the church. In order to be equipped to walk out our purpose and our ministry, God could have said, "here are skills or processes that I am giving you, here is a detailed list of what I am asking of you, here is a step by step instruction guide. **He did not. Instead, he gave us people.**

Eph. 4:11-12 (NLT)

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

You have to be relationally connected with equipping ministries, ministries that prioritize relationship and connection over all else. That's why you can't get effectively equipped through a relationship you have with a Christian minister over the internet, through their books, or on TV. You can learn, but the impartation and equipping comes in the relationship. Paul said "you have many instructors, but not many fathers."

Eph. 4:16 (NLT)

He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

You need that help, and you need to be that help to others.

So it's relational, it's connection. This book about eternal purpose does not have tonnes of relationship advice in it for no good reason. Your success in life will very much be determined by the quality of relationships you have. So don't isolate in your quest for purpose, realize it's bound up in healthy connection with others.

4. Its Multi-faceted**Eph. 3:10 (AMP)**

So now through the church the multifaceted wisdom of God [in all its countless aspects] might now be made known [revealing the mystery] to the [angelic] rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

In our day and age, ever since the enlightenment we live according to the scientific method. We want to explain everything, embrace certainty, and in the pursuit of certainty, we over simplify everything.

God simplified things by telling us that all the promises are yes and amen in Christ. That in Christ are all the hidden treasure of wisdom and knowledge, but at the same time, in Christ dwells the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form.

BUT...because eternal life, knowing Him (john) is relational, even if you boil Him down to love, what that love looks like in one situation to the next is as unique as the endless number of people that ever existed and the accumulation of every decision they have ever made.

There is a future waiting for you that is beyond your ability to imagine. It may take some outside the box thinking. Letting God show you things and move you in ways you never even thought of, dreamed of nor imagined. Something that no one in your circle could have ever seen as a possibility for you. Something so unexpected, out of left field that it leaves you and those who know you thinking, "where did that come from?"

That's normal life with Jesus. That's the multi-faceted wisdom of God. That's God doing "...superabundantly more than all that we dare ask or think [infinitely beyond our greatest prayers, hopes, or dreams], according to His power that is at work within us..." **Ephesians 3:20 (AMP)**

5. Demonstrative and Visible

Eph. 3:10a (NLT)

"God's purpose in all this was to use the church to **display** his wisdom"

You were made to be displayed!

Eph. 2:6-7 (NKJV)

"...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

Might be uncomfortable with this... but if your plan and purpose in life is defined as something that you can keep to yourself, where you are not seen, you are hiding in the back... you have yet to grasp the full measure of what the grace of God is supposed to do in your life. It brings you out of hiding and makes you and your life a visible showcase for what God can do in a human life.

Eph. 4:13-14 (NLT)

"...for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

When you manifest the multi-faceted wisdom of God you will light up like a Christmas tree.

Daniel 12:3(NLT)

Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever.

Don't be afraid of the attention. I think this is why Paul had to say to Timothy when encouraging him to pursue his life calling:

1 Timothy 4:15

*Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may **see your progress.***

Matthew 5:14-16 (MSG)

14-16 *"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.*

Summary:

You were made on purpose for purpose. The gospel of Jesus Christ is that clarion call to a redeemed life of purpose and meaning through relationship with God by faith.

His purpose, to make known the unknown, to make the unknowable God knowable, this has been accomplished in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and is unpacked through you, through us His Church, as we unpack who he is, the secret kept hidden from ages past, Christ you [us] the hope of glory.

Pray regularly that to be an active participant in this purpose we would see what we already have, and that:

Eph. 1:17-19a

"...the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."