

I was 13 maybe 14 years old, sitting at the desk in my bedroom. I was writing my thoughts down; Just my raw thoughts. I called it a poem. I think that helped me justify the need to put my thoughts on paper. There wasn't really anything poetic about it. Once I finished, I put it in a box in my closet. I didn't want my parents to find it. I was afraid that if they did, they would think I was suicidal or something. I was thinking about that, I just didn't want them to know. I was probably embarrassed. I knew my parents loved me a lot and they would want to talk to me about it, I just didn't know at the time that that was what I was supposed to do.

The letter I wrote (or poem) was all questions; Questions asking what the point is. What is the point to life? All my life I had been told that we were just some cosmic accident, goop that accidentally started to breath and think. Humanity was just a meaningless combination of chemicals – a blip in the cosmos. I wrote if asking if there was really just nothing after we died, then what was the point of anything? If the end result was nothing, then what would it matter if we lived a good life or a bad one? If our life was long or short, if we had a lot of fun or cried a lot, or if we left the world a better place or worse one – none of that really mattered if the end result was just nothing. In fact, it wouldn't change anything if I lived a long life or a short one.

I was loved dearly. I had a great family – an awesome mom, dad, and sister. At school I didn't have many friends, but I had some good ones, and I was making some new ones. I felt like I belonged. What I didn't have was purpose.

In the foyer, where we are selling youth banquet tickets, you can see our banner. It has three words at the bottom: love, purpose, and belonging. These three areas need to be in balance in a person's life. When we are out of balance or one is lacking we can get depressed. And in our youth ministry we want every student who walks in those doors to experience someone loving them: starting with a simple hey, "how's it going? I'm glad you're here." from a leader or a peer. We want them to feel loved. And we want them to know that they have a place to belong here. No matter what they believe, what background they come from, or how cool or unpopular they feel they are in school, when they come through these doors, we want them to know that they belong here. We want it to be a safe place where students can come and learn about their purpose – why they are on this earth, and that ultimately, only through God can we experience true unconditional love, a place of belonging as a child of God and in His church, and learn of our one true purpose for living.

In the last 15 years of ministry I have seen so many people struggle with finding their purpose. We are told now that finding your identity is some sort of life long journey. You have to consider, try new things, and making time for those things takes priority over everything else. In students I watch as they put church, faith, and the Bible, in last place. They are too busy finding out who they are. And parents try to help them. They sign them up for a battery of different activities, somewhere inside them hoping their child is a prodigy, like those kids we see on the internet. Maybe they will discover early what it is they were made for. Maybe they will be the next Mozart, the next NHL superstar, the next successful

business person, scientist or artist, and let's be honest, some parents just hope their kid gets out of bed and picks anything to do with their life.

But they are so busy, and not just teenagers, adults too. They don't make time for God. I mean, maybe a Sunday once or twice a month, I mean you try for every other Sunday, but you know, stuff comes up. Because why spend your time going to church, or more time consuming – going to a bible study. When there are more important questions life to answer like “What in the world am I here for?”

But consider this. What if – God didn't create you for the purpose of being the next successful business person? What if he didn't create you to be a famous athlete, bestselling author, or superstar musician? What if the purpose of your life was not to be a good person, or to contribute to society, What if it was not to love, be a good mom or dad or spouse, the pursuit of happiness, or to try and leave the world a little better than you found it?

The question, ‘what is my purpose?’ has been on all of our minds at some point in our life, and I believe that the answer is crazy simple – to the point where many will dismiss it and overlook it – and if they do, they will live a life with constant anger, frustration, and hopelessness. It's like we are trying to cram a puzzle piece into the wrong spot. It doesn't fit, yet we keep trying, and it's frustrating. I believe that scripture teaches that our purpose in life is to bring Glory to God. That's it. And when we align our purpose with God's design for us, it's like that puzzle piece that fits – it easily slides into place. It makes sense.

Now before you shrug that off and say thanks pastor for that churchy answer. Let me pray that the Holy Spirit would open your eyes to see what His word says, and that he has not made it complicated, but it's us that has complicated things. Let's pray.

We will be in a couple of different verses today. The first in 1 Corinthians 10, and the second place will be in Isaiah 43. And as you are turning to 1 Corinthians 10, let us be reminded that God has created everything. We are his creation. Regardless of how you believe God created the world, He made us, in his image. When we deeply acknowledge that fact it will help us wrap our heads around the idea that He knows what's best for us. Let's read verses 23 -31, just to give you some context for the verse, but we are going to rest on verse 31.

23 “All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 26 For “the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.” 27 If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— 29 I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

So the context that this is sitting in, is Paul saying that we need to not take part in idolatry. And what is idolatry? Well in Colossians 3:5-6 Paul says: “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.” It’s not only worshipping a false god, but giving your heart and passion to something other than God. That could be anything from your cell phone, a video game, money, your job, your family, your ego. If you place it more important than God, you have made it into an idol.

Paul is saying here in Corinthians, that no matter what food you eat or drink (or really in anything that you do), you need to do it for the Glory of God, and that will change how you might proceed in a given situation – because in this case, making someone stumble doesn’t bring glory to God, so we don’t do it – we restrict our freedoms if we need to. In all things, even eating or drinking, we need to do it for God’s glory – ALL THINGS. Now let’s flip to Isaiah 43. Just the first seven verses. This passage also tells us why God formed us.

Is 43:1-7

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.

2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.

3 For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

4 Because you are precious in my eyes,
and honored, and I love you,

I give men in return for you,
peoples in exchange for your life.

5 Fear not, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you.

6 I will say to the north, Give up,
and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,

7 everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.”

He created us to *display* his glory. That he might be *known* and *praised*. That we would live in such a way that reflects His majesty. That is why we were created. That is the most important reason why you and I exist on this earth. And that's a beautiful thing. When we understand this and start to live it, it's the puzzle piece that makes sense and fits perfectly.

Let's look at an example.

On the left, that's you and me. You are trying to figure out why you are on this Earth. What's your purpose?

People try to live for a lot of different things. (Wealth or fame, good career, to be an amazing husband or wife, or to be a good parent, or to simply be a good person, or even a good Christian)

Most of the time, we pick very noble things to make into our purpose. But here's what happens.

When we live for one of these false purposes, we set ourselves up to be angry and frustrated. You see obstacles get in our way that prevent us from living towards our purpose. Those lines represent obstacles. Let's say that your purpose was to be the best mother and father that you could be.

To raise kids who contribute in meaningful ways to society. Well what can get in the way of that? Well, you might not have enough money. It's expensive to have kids. To feed them, clothe them, send them to school, sign them up for lessons to help shape them, to feed them again, and sometimes feed their entire group of friends they bring home with them. What if you lose your job? And you are stressed, and aren't being the best version of yourself that you want to be? Or the opposite: you are working too much. Too many hours away from the office. Too grouchy when you get home and too tired to spend quality time with your kids. Or what if where you live doesn't meet your desire for raising your kids. You can't get them into the school you want, or your home isn't big enough, or the yard isn't large enough. Or what if, and Lord help us, if your child were to die. Or you can't have kids. A loss like that cripples you when that's your purpose.

Every time we hit an obstacle, we get angry that something is preventing us from living our purpose and we immediately try to remove it. And we feel guilty because we have so many obstacles. And as we try to remove those obstacles, if we can't or it keeps coming back, we get frustrated. You know you are here when you throw your hands up in the air. The more intensely you pursue that goal, the more frustration you experience. And if we realize that the roadblock is not going to go away, then we experience hopelessness and we can become depressed because it means we will never achieve the purpose we were striving for.

Now you can put in whatever purpose you want here – no matter how noble. Each comes with its own set of roadblocks. Only as a Christian and understanding this reality from scripture; that we were made to live for God's glory, and that all our needs are found in Christ - Then we can experience more of the life God has created us to live.

In order to bring Glory to God, we must listen and do what God wants us to do with our lives. Jeremiah 9:23 - 24 says, "[Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his](#)

might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight.” says the LORD.” Jesus said the two greatest commandments were to Love God with all that we are and to love others. When we live for His Glory, it means we are doing these things; Bringing honor and glory to Him. He wants us to adore and love Him as we care for this earth, and the people and animals on it. You and I were made to have a relationship with God.

Once we realign and make our purpose to bring glory to God, nothing can get in the way of us fulfilling our purpose. There are no roadblocks because they become opportunities to live your purpose instead. [So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.](#) Can you bring Glory to God when you have no money? Absolutely! Can you bring glory to God when you have no job, no home? Of course! Can you bring glory to God in the midst of great difficulty or the loss of a loved one? Without a doubt.

There is NOTHING that can happen in your live that will ever prevent you from bringing Glory to God. EVER. Now you may lose focus. You might become unaligned again and start living for something else. But the best way to notice that is through anger and frustration. We know from scripture that God gets angry, it's not a sin to be angry, or even always a bad thing. And in this case, it should act like our body's alarm system. So when you are going through life, and you notice that you are angry or frustrated. Stop, and take a moment to realign. You will notice that you are trying to live for the wrong goal. So the best thing to do is to stop, and pray. Ask God, the simple question – **“How can I bring you glory in this situation?”** and God will answer. Either he will speak in your heart, or through another person, or through His word and the wisdom he has given you through it.

I remember in my first year of marriage, it was after my mentor had taught me all this, and I remember that there was this one argument, and I don't remember what it was about, but I went into our bedroom angry and frustrated. And I said “God, I'm so frustrated!” I remembered this and prayed “God how can I glorify you in this situation?” And God immediately gave me the answer. Which in that case was “Go and apologise for being an idiot to your wife.” You see God will never lead us to do something against his word, because it is holy and true, but only things that will help us better love Him, honor him, and love others. As soon as we know what to do, we can ask God for His strength, through the power of the Holy Spirit who is in all true believers, to then empower us to be able to carry out what we need to do.

It doesn't make difficult situations go away, or get easier. But it does change the way we approach those situations. I remember a time when I was a youth leader, and I was in a youth bible study, and we had these two Jr. high guys who just wouldn't pay attention. They would wrestle and fight for their favorite chair. Not listen, crack jokes while others in the group were trying to learn. They wouldn't listen to me to the youth pastor who was trying to get them to focus and stop interrupting. We were trying to have a good Bible study where the kids could learn God's word and experience him. And these two guys were undermining that and preventing that from happening. Over coffee the youth pastor and I were talking about what we could do. We were contemplating asking them to not come to Bible study any more, or at least until they could behave. And I remembered 1 Corinthians 10:31. I asked the other Bible

study leader “How do we glorify God in this situation?” And we realized that if we were to cast out these particular kids we would probably lose them. They were searching for love and attention. So instead of asking them to leave, which may have led to bitterness and resentment from them, we started meeting with them outside the group time, spending more time with them, and loving them more. And it didn’t take long for their behavior to change once they realized they did not need to earn our attention.

You were created by a loving God, who created you in His image and for His glory. Your purpose is to bring Him glory in all that you do. In your career, in how you love your family, when you meet with friends, paint a picture, play sports, or whether you eat or you drink.

You’ve been angry and frustrated a lot. You may even feel like God doesn’t care about the struggles you are in, or the challenges you face. Know this: God loves you. You are his beloved creations. You are created in His image: you are beautifully and wonderfully made. Your identity is in Christ. And that is no small thing to be loved by the creator.

You are made to be in relationship with him, and to bring Him glory with your life. When you surrender your life and your will completely to Him, and instead of living in anger and frustration and hopelessness, you instead begin to live with all that you are for God and His glory, you will experience freedom and joy. But you have to surrender and believe that Jesus really did do what the Bible says: that God so loved the world that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Do you believe that?

Maybe feel like you have been trying to fit the wrong puzzle piece into place, and it’s not working. When you realign your purpose to what God says in his word, it’s like picking up the right piece that slides right into place.

Let’s pray