

2



Lesson 2

Why am I Alive?

Introduction

To follow Jesus well, we must start with a very basic question – “Why am I alive?” Strong disciples know they have been created by God for a purpose. They have an aim in life. Though they may stray from that aim from time to time, they have an ongoing knowledge that they exist for a purpose beyond themselves.

Sadly, much of humanity is oblivious to such a concept. Modern man often lives for nothing more than the what can be seen or experienced. Material things, sensual pleasures, and ego often rule the day. Because there is little concept of God, each exists for his or her own self. Purpose seems like an absurd notion, a laughable concept. Postmodern philosophy has duped many into believing the grand goal of human existence is to just enjoy life and then die.

Conversation Starter

Everyone has what we call “a worldview” – a perspective or outlook by which one interprets life. At the foundation of each worldview is this question of “Why am I alive?” WHAT WORLD VIEW DO MANY PEOPLE LIVE BY IN TODAY’S WORLD? HOW DOES A WORLDVIEW SHAPE HOW ONE LIVES?

Transition

When we study Scripture, we find every human has a wonderful three-fold purpose – to know God, to love others, and to reflect God to others.

1. To Know God

Illustrate

According to the way the Lord designed us, we are hardwired to live in a relationship with Him. Blaise Pascal, a French mathematician of the seventeenth century, was known to say that every man and woman is created with a God-shaped vacuum in his or her heart. We are all empty and we all have a gaping hole in our soul until we tap into a relationship with our Creator.

A. A Purpose (Genesis 1:26)

Our ultimate purpose in life is seen from the earliest pages of Scripture. When God set about making the first man and woman, He said, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness'" (Genesis 1:26). According to the Bible, humans are designed to be like God to some degree. We have been made in the "image" of God.

What does this mean? A clue in Genesis 1:26 helps us discern the primary meaning of God's Word. Notice how God spoke to Himself.

Key Scripture:

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.'" (Genesis 1:26)

When He created man and woman, He said, "Let us make man...." Pay careful attention to the first-person plural use of "us."

Why did God speak of Himself in such a way? Does He have split personalities? Is there a pantheon of gods? Not hardly. The reference to "us" is a reference to the Trinity. God exists in three persons – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Within the Trinity, there is a sense of interrelatedness. God is three in one, and the three communicate and relate with one another. As beings made in the image of God, we are created for a similar sort of relational dynamic. We are made to have a relationship with God – to know Him, to glorify Him, and to enjoy Him forever!

B. A Problem (Genesis 2:16-17, Romans 5:12)

Despite God's purpose, there is a great problem in the human condition. Shortly after Creation, catastrophe struck! The first man and woman rebelled against God's plan for mankind. You see, as an all-wise being, the Lord created principles and axioms by which His created order was to operate. He provided for the first humans to receive the provisions they needed. However, all provision was to be enjoyed within His set parameters. The Lord said, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

Adam and Eve disobeyed God's Laws and sought provision for themselves outside of God's ordained means (Genesis 3:1-7). As a result, the Word of the Lord came to pass. They gained the capacity to physically die and they immediately experienced spiritual

Key Scripture:

"Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned." (Romans 5:12)

In 1647, the Westminster Shorter Catechism was produced. It asked a series of questions and provided answers to those questions in order to help Christians understand core teachings of Scripture. The first question asked was, "What is the chief end of man?" The answer to that question was, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever."

death. They were ushered outside of the presence of God to live in isolation, separated from their Creator (Genesis 3:20-24).

Adam and Eve's sin didn't occur in a vacuum. It had disastrous consequences for all of humanity. Because of their rebellion, a spiritual disease spread.

C. A Plan (Genesis 3:15, John 3:16)

Key Scriptures:

"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

In His rich mercy and love, God created a plan to rescue mankind from sin. He made a way for us to be restored unto Himself. Evidence of His plan was seen even in the Garden of Eden. When He announced the consequences for the first sin, the Lord told Satan, "I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15). Bible scholars often regard the Lord's words to Satan as the first mention of Jesus in the Bible.

The Bible shares bad news when it talks about sin, but it also shares good news in talking about salvation. Though we are all naturally estranged from God, He created a way for us to be made right with Him. He has sent a man through woman to provide rescue for all. That man was Jesus. The Bible says, "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one

and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

2. To Love Others (Genesis 1:27, John 17:21, Proverbs 18:1, Matthew 22:37-40, Matthew 7:12)

You see, we aren't just made to know God. The author of Genesis alluded to this fact in Genesis 1:27 when he spoke of the way in which the Lord created more than one human. We are alive to relate to others. Jesus made this abundantly clear in a prayer He prayed on our behalf. Shortly before His death, He prayed, "May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe you sent me" (John 17:21).

It's interesting to think about the fact that Jesus prayed. If He was God, why did He need to pray?

Simple. His prayers were simply a continuation of the relationship He enjoyed with God before He came to earth. Remember, God exists as three in one, and the three parts of God relate to one another.

Key Scriptures:

Genesis 1:27

"May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe you sent me." (John 17:21)

Apply

Just as the three parts of God relate to one another, we are designed to relate. We need a healthy relationship with God and healthy relationships with others.

Illustrate

In their song "I Am A Rock," Simon and Garfunkel sang, "I am alone...Hiding in my room, safe within my womb, I touch no one and no one touches me, I am a rock, I am an island, And a rock feels no pain."

3. To Help Others Know God (Genesis 1:26)

Apply

Our purpose in life does not end with knowing God and loving others. Within our triangle of relationships, there is something more specific God desires of us. He wants us to reflect His character to others. By Divine design, it is His intent for those who don't know Him to come to know Him through the way we live.

This reality is seen from the Genesis account of creation.

Key Scripture:

“Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26).

Remember how God said, “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). In a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures called the Septuagint, the word translated “image” is one form which we get our word “icon.” The ancient writers of Scripture may not have understood our meaning of the term, but we can perhaps get a picture of what it means to be made in the image of

God by considering a word origin.

When we think of the word “icon,” we think of an image or shape that represents something. Our smartphones and mobile devices are filled with icons. Some represent apps and others represent control settings. If I want to play my favorite game, I know which one to click. There are icons for news platforms, language-learning utilities, and productive tools. Every day, each of us click and touch icons. Without them, we would have to make a lot of adjustments to how we live.

Another type of icon is integral to how God has made us to live.

Illustrate

Just as our favorite apps are represented by certain images or characters, we exist to serve as icons that represent God. When others look at how we live, they should see our Creator.

Discussion

Have you ever wondered why the Lord just doesn't teleport Christians to heaven the moment they are saved? Why does He leave us here on earth? The answer is simple – He wants us to introduce others to Him. By His Divine design, we are His icons on the earth. He has made things to work in such a way that we bear witness of Him through two means.

A. Witness with your Walk (Matthew 5:16)

The metaphor of walking is used frequently in Scripture to speak of the Christian's lifestyle (Ephesians 5:2). When we embrace Christ's commands to love God and love others, the Lord will gradually change how we live by the power of His presence in our lives. He will shape our attitudes and our actions, our beliefs and our behaviors, our talk and our walk. As a result of His work in us, others will see a difference. Jesus told His disciples, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

Key Scripture:

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

B. Witness with your Words (Colossians 4:6)

Our walk alone will never change anyone. To be used by God as icons for Him, we must share words. From the beginning of time, God has used speech to communicate His truth to humanity (Genesis 1:28-30). One cannot have full-knowledge of God without understanding certain concepts via the communication of some sort of media.

Key Scripture:

“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.”

(Romans 10:15)

In Colossians 4:6, we read this instruction to believers: “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.” I don’t know about you, but the metaphor of salt really helps me. I struggle with sometimes saying too little for Jesus. At other times, I probably come off as too strong. Salt is a good picture of how we are to go about witnessing. We must use “speech,” as Paul said. However, we have to be strategic in using the right amount. Some people can only handle a little and others require a lot.

Illustrate

I think of witnessing like chips at a Mexican restaurant. I know people who douse the entire basket with salt before. Other people I know like the chips with just a little salt and the pre-applied amount from the restaurant is enough. I have one friend who chooses to apply salt to the salsa. Everyone has different tastes and preferences because everyone is different!

Apply

Witnessing with our words requires a sensitivity to people. As we would use salt with forethought and caution, we are to be vigilant and tactful concerning how we share the gospel with others. The gospel is often slow to advance because we haven’t paid attention to Scripture’s salt metaphor. Some have used salt too sparingly, while others have been obnoxious and over-the-top in how they dispense it. If we truly love others and do the work of relating to them as God intends, He will give us spiritual sensitivity concerning how “salty” we should be with our speech.

Follow Me Challenges

PERSONAL: Last week we began creating a list of five people we know who need the love of Jesus (our “My 5 List”). This week, Identify 2 to 3 people in your marketplace or places of recreation/hobbies to add to your “My 5 List.”

PUBLIC: Participate in, invite folks to, and/or donate for a TBC Backyard Egg Hunt. More information can be found at tabernaclebaptist.org/events.

PRAYER: Pray for...

- people on your “My 5 List.”
- TBC Backyard Egg Hunts.