

# (Basics) 31. God's Purpose for Man

by Zac Poonen

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*God's purpose for man is to show forth the likeness of God and to reflect His nature, and Jesus' life demonstrates how we can fulfill this purpose.*

**Duration:** 12:49

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:1, Matthew 22:37

**Topics:** "Following Jesus", "Gods Purpose"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living according to the example set by Jesus Christ. He compares the ineffective method of teaching swimming through instructions on a blackboard to the powerful impact of learning through example. The speaker highlights that the Old Testament provided commandments but lacked a clear example for how to live. However, Jesus Christ's life on earth demonstrated how God intended for humanity to live. The speaker encourages listeners to find meaning and purpose in life by following God's word and growing in likeness to Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

In the first chapter of Genesis, the very first page of the Bible, God gives us the reason why He created man. And it's because man has completely forgotten about that, that throughout the world, men and women face problems for which they don't know what the solution is. They don't seem to find meaning and purpose in life.

Well, you'll never find it till you come back to what God says in His Word. You know, the Bible is really like a book of instructions. If you buy a tape recorder or a washing machine or some expensive electronic gadget, along with that you will get a little booklet which are the manufacturer's instructions on how to use this particular gadget that you have bought.

And if you are wise, you will just follow the instructions in that booklet exactly. You won't change a single thing, because you realize what? You realize that the manufacturer knows better than you how that product was made, how it's supposed to run. If there are certain special warnings given saying, don't do this and don't plug this in here and don't put a jack into this, I'm sure you would not experiment.

You would just obey because you may blow up a 10,000 rupee or 20,000 rupee bit of equipment. And you don't want to lose that much money. You would experiment with things which are cheap perhaps, but not with something expensive.

Now, what is the value of your life, a human life? It's far more than 20,000 rupees, far more than many lakhs. In fact, once Jesus said, What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? So there he took a balance and placed the whole world and all its wealth and all its glory and honor on one side. And one human soul on the other side.

And he said that one human soul was heavier. It weighed more than all the world. So you're very valuable.

Then how is it that man who's so valuable is so careless with following his maker's instructions when it comes to how to run his life? That's the tragedy. If you want to know why there's so much chaos in the world and why things have gotten a real mess, here's the answer. God gave man certain instructions and he never followed it.

And that's the reason for confusion in the world, in individual lives, in families and between nations. So let's look at Genesis chapter 1. We read here about the time when God made different things on this earth. Each day he made something new.

But whenever he made any of these things, he never told us the purpose with which he made them. For example, the first day he created light. What was the purpose? Well, we don't know.

We can guess. But God never said what the reason was. The next day he created the heavens.

No purpose mentioned. The next day he created the dry land and the plants and the trees, no purpose mentioned, and so on. And so on with the animals too, and the fish and the birds.

But when it came to making man, finally, before he even started making man, he said, Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea or the birds of the sky. So we see the first purpose with which God created man was that man should show forth the likeness of God. That means if man moved around, you could see what God was like.

Because God is a spirit and invisible. God wanted his character to be manifested through a created being. Now, in an earlier study we had considered how God had made the angels before he made man.

But there is no evidence in the Bible that God made the angels in his image. No angel could manifest the likeness of God. That is a unique privilege that God gave to man.

Man was made in the likeness of God to show forth God's own image and character. Once we understand this, we will see that the whole purpose of Jesus dying for us and redeeming us was in order that we might be brought back to God's original purpose for us. Now supposing we were to draw this in graphical form.

Think of God's purpose for man being like a straight line going slightly upwards because God's purpose for man was progressive. And that was God's purpose, that man should progress. And here is a straight line going upwards.

But somewhere at the beginning of that straight line Adam fell. So he never progressed, he just dipped straight down. Let that line go down, the fall.

What did Jesus do? He came down to the pit where man was and lifted him back up to that straight line. Now man has been brought back to that straight line of God's purpose for man. So the whole purpose of God for man is not fulfilled in Jesus lifting us up from our sin and our failure.

No. That's only bringing us back to the place where Adam was when he fell. It's restoring the failure of Adam.

Bringing man back to the place where he was before he fell. But then now we need to understand what is God's purpose. What's this straight line? That is to reflect his likeness.

So it's not enough to say that your sins are forgiven. Many Christians are just happy saying, well my sins are forgiven. That's like saying, well God lifted me up from the pit and brought me up to the straight line.

But what about progressing along that straight line? We need to understand what that means. It means growing in likeness to Jesus Christ. You know when Jesus came to earth, he didn't come only to die for the sins of the world.

That was only part of his purpose in coming to earth. His death on the cross was just an act of one day, six hours, and that was it. And he died and he was buried and he rose again on the third day.

But the life that he lived for 33 years, what was that supposed to demonstrate? That was supposed to demonstrate how God wanted man to live on this earth. Jesus' life was a demonstration of how God wanted man to live. So if you want to know how you're supposed to live, it's very easy.

You just got to look at the life of Jesus Christ as described in the Bible. And there you have, not just in words, but a living demonstration. See, in the Old Testament, there was no example that God gave man.

God gave commandments. Everybody knows the Ten Commandments, which is also a picture of how God wanted man to live. But it was a very faint picture, very, very incomplete.

All the laws that God gave man about mutual relationships and everything else were all a faint picture when Jesus summed up the Old Testament law with these two words. He said the whole law can be summed up in, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. In those two words, those two sentences, the entire duty of man is summed up.

But it's far better to have an example who shows us how this is to be done. See, if I were to try and teach you swimming, there are two ways in which I could do it. One is, I could explain to you on a blackboard how you must move your hands and how you must move your legs and draw certain diagrams on the blackboard and tell you to do all that.

And then say, OK, now go and jump in the river and follow the instructions that you saw on the blackboard and swim. But you're not going to learn to swim that way. Even if you study very carefully all the diagrams I drew on the blackboard, you'll still probably drown.

That's a very poor way. But if I were to take you to the river and say, Well, now just watch me as I swim. Just do exactly what I do.

That's the way you will learn. You see, instruction is never as good as example. Any amount of instruction on any subject is never as good as example.

We can say the Old Testament was instruction. The New Testament, we have an example. Jesus Christ demonstrated through his life what it means to be a human being, to how we're supposed to live.

So when the Bible says we are not under the law now, what does it mean? It means we don't need the blackboard now because we've got an example in Jesus Christ. But if you don't have Jesus Christ as your example, then you certainly need to go back to the law. The mistake that a lot of Christians have made is they say we are free from the law.

We don't need the Ten Commandments. We don't need the instructions of God. Fine.

Provided Jesus Christ has become your example. But if Jesus has not become your example, then you need the law, very much so. And so what does it mean to come under grace, to be free from the law? It means that I have now seen Jesus as my example, who lived on earth, manifesting the nature of God so perfectly that he turned around to his disciples just before he went to the cross and said, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father.

If you've seen the way I've lived, what I lived for, you've seen what God is like. You've seen that God is kind. You've seen that God is pure.

He's holy, loving, humble. Everything. And our calling now is to show forth that same nature of God.

You know, what we read in Genesis 1.26, God's original plan for man to reflect his likeness, to manifest his nature. Now that calling comes to you and me. And this is why God has given us the Holy Spirit.

So that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can show forth God's nature in our daily life.

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