

Introduction:

Today's message is the third and final instalment of a mini-series entitled "God knows". This week's subject is "Purpose".



To summarise briefly for those who were not here for the last two Sundays - the point of these three messages has been to remind us that God knows everything, including the end of everything - and that we can therefore trust Him completely with absolutely every aspect of our lives.

- God's plan is perfect - whenever we diverge from His perfect will for our lives, we miss His best for us.
- He will make every situation count in His quest to perfect us for His glory. Does this mean that the bad or difficult things that occur in our lives are caused by Him? Mostly not, they are normally a result of bad choices or someone's sin - either our own or someone else's.
- Does the Lord have the right to shape and perfect us? Of course He does - that which has been created is always subject to its Creator! Two weeks ago we illustrated this by speaking about baking a cake.

The Sunday before last we spoke about "What's in a name?" where we saw that the Lord named people in a way that demonstrates that He does know everything - including things that are going to happen before they ever happen. The names that He gave also revealed something of His will for the recipient of the name - the two examples that we looked at were those of Jesus Christ (the LORD saves, the anointed One) and Peter (Rock).

Last Sunday was about "Hope" where we saw that true hope is actually confident expectation, or anticipation - and that we can therefore only truly hope in the will of the Lord - Who knows everything.

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Now, let us turn to this week's subject: "Purpose".

There is a vast difference between understanding our God-given purpose, and trying to define a purpose for ourselves that is based upon some arbitrary set of standards - for instance, people might suggest that we look at our skills or abilities, or ask what we are passionate about (by the way, how many of us are truly passionate about anything anymore?).

I googled the phrase "purpose of life", and found reference to more than 58m video clips(!) and more than 1m books. I think that you may agree that this must mean that people really would like to know what the purpose of life is, wouldn't you? But, surely, one should ask an authoritative source such questions? So let us ask the ultimate Authority, the Lord, what He says that our purpose should be (or is)!

But first we'll check that we are all on the same page about the meaning of the word "purpose".



This means that as we discuss our (mankind's) purpose, we are speaking of what it is that we were created for. I plan to share just three aspects of mankind's God-given purpose - we could discuss more aspects, but our time is limited.

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To set the scene for everything else, and to discuss the first of our purposes, let's have a look at part of the creation story as recorded in *Genesis*, where, after creating the earth and everything on and around it, the Lord makes man in His own image, and sets him on his course - to "have dominion" as set out in these verses of Scripture.



### Genesis 1:26 (ESV)

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."



### Genesis 1:27 (ESV)

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

See how man was created in the image of God, after His likeness? What does this mean? The Lord is Supreme - He rules absolutely everything; so we are created with the ability to rule.



### Genesis 1:28 (ESV)

<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

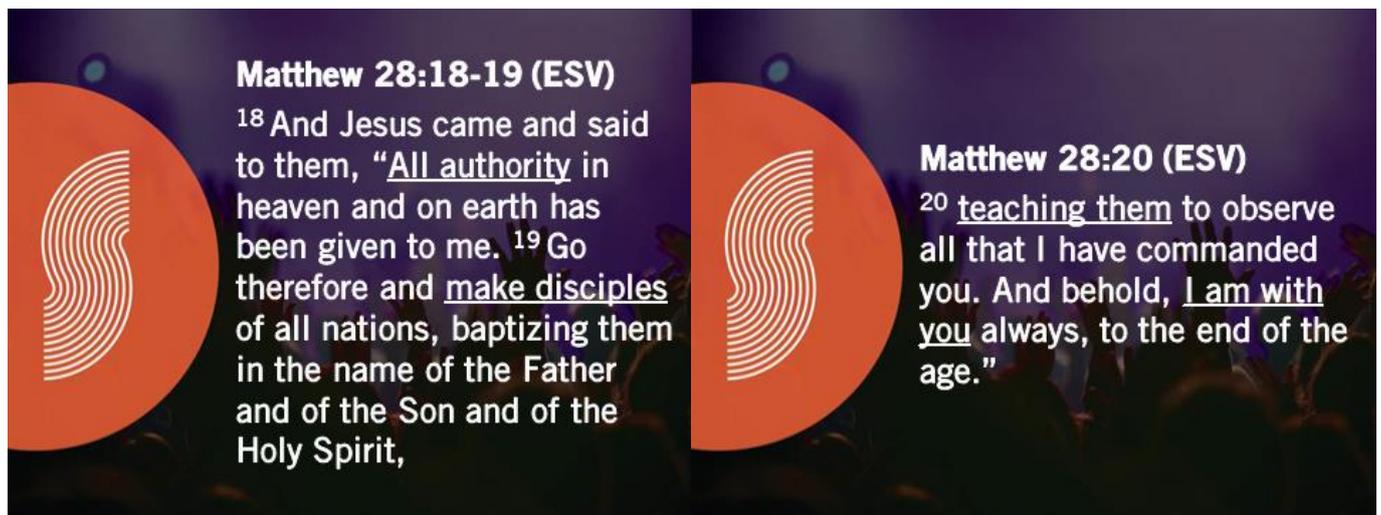
God said that we should be fruitful and multiply - clearly that was meant in the sense that Adam and Eve should have children, but I think that we may also take it to mean that we should be fruitful in every area of our lives. As we are created in the likeness of God, Who is the Creator of all things, does this not mean that we should be productive of fruit that pleases Him? We'll come back to this thought a little later...

To have dominion means that we rule. And as may be seen from these verses, God appointed mankind to rule over every living thing on the earth. It is interesting to note that Satan appeared as a serpent (snake) when he tempted Adam and Eve - in other words, they were supposed to rule in that situation too - but they didn't, and that is why mankind does such a poor job of "having dominion" to this day - we gave our authority to rule to the enemy, Satan, when we submitted to him in sin.

What we, as mankind, are supposed to be is to be those who are the agents who change things according to the God's plan - by our obedience to the Lord, and by prayer. I don't think that any of us have truly even scratched the surface of an understanding of prayer - how and what we unlock when we pray, how the course of history is changed when we pray the will of the Lord. We are supposed to be history-changers! We are supposed to affect the course of nations and empires! We are supposed to exercise dominion...

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For mankind's second purpose, let's have a look at Jesus' final words to His disciples before He ascended from the earth...

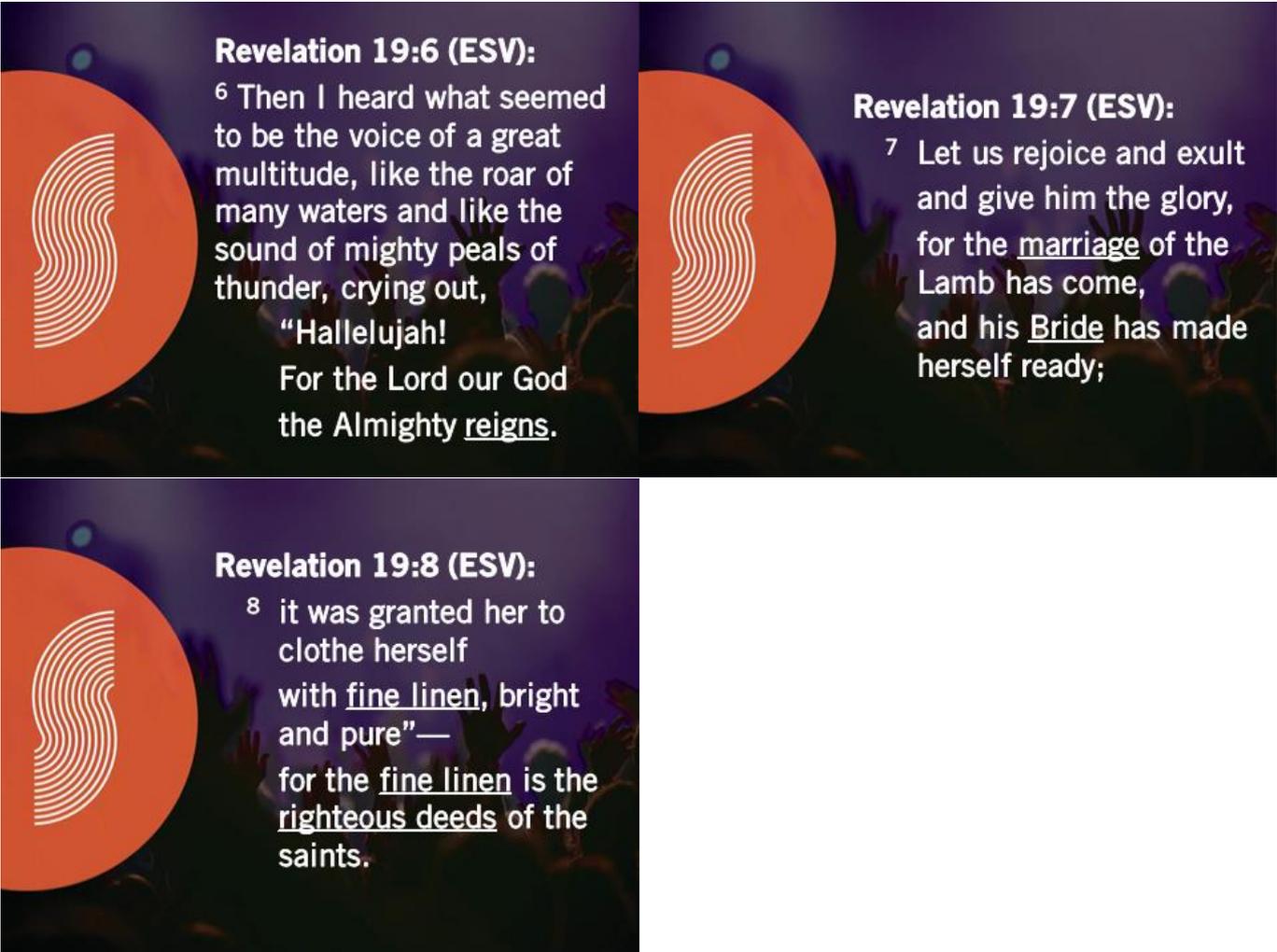


Jesus says that all authority has been given to Him - in heaven and on earth - so He rules everywhere! He has given us (mankind) an ability to make disciples (and the original disciples did just that, very effectively - here we are!) - but look at what we have done with this ability! We make disciples for a clothing brand, or a motorcar, or a cell phone, or a beverage, or a sporting team - instead of for Christ! If we think about it, we can see that the Lord has equipped and called all of us to make disciples for Him - it's in our dna, in a sense. But we have taken our God-given gifting and turned it around to serve the enemy. As an example, see how skilled religious people, or the so-called pro-choice movement are in promoting their point of view, or the evolutionists theirs.

It may therefore be seen that mankind is in fact fulfilling his mandate to produce fruit - but is it good fruit? Is the ultimate good fruit not our "righteous acts"? In other words, those things that we do in obedience to the Lord? He promises in verse 20 that He will be with us always - so we need not worry about not being able to know His will.

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Now for the third purpose...



**Revelation 19:6 (ESV):**

<sup>6</sup> Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns."

**Revelation 19:7 (ESV):**

<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

**Revelation 19:8 (ESV):**

<sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

We are the Bride of Christ! Just think about that - we are to become one with the Son of God, Who sits at the right hand of His Father in eternity - forever. Remember that marriage is where two people become one? And that is what the Father wants for His Son and for us!

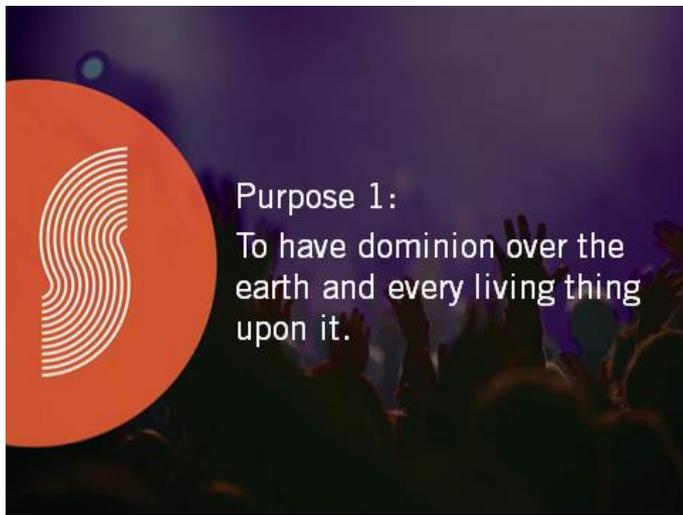
So that is our third purpose - to be prepared to be the Bride of Christ.

Should you want to research the truth of this for yourself, let me give you a list of Scripture references to write down for your further study:

- John 3:27-36
- Matthew 9:14-15
- John 15:12-17
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

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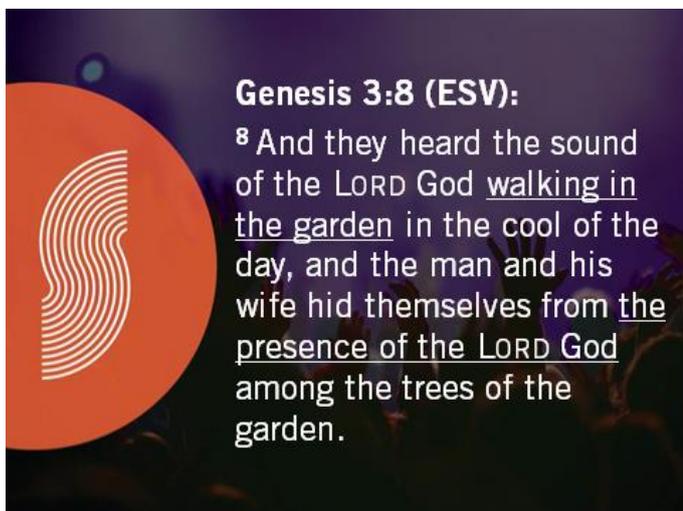
Now let's think about these three purposes:



If we were to truly exercise dominion in the way that we are supposed to, would the earth not be a much better place to be?

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I think that it is important to remember that in the beginning, mankind "walked with God".



We can deduce from these verses, and also the fact that the Lord discussed His creation with Adam, that they spent time together. What do you think that they talked about? Surely it must have been about what Adam was caring for? In other words, Adam probably shared everything with God! And that is surely the very best way to "have dominion" - in consultation with the One Who made it all.

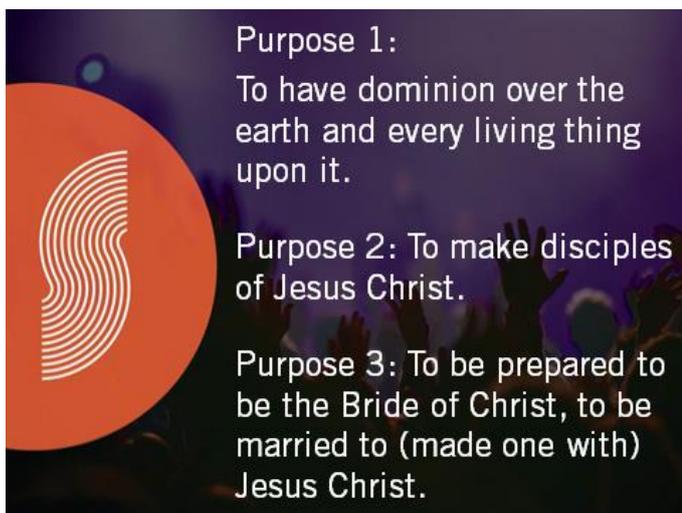
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The most loving thing that I can do for any person is to firstly, introduce them to Jesus Christ (Anointed Saviour) and secondly, to disciple them for Jesus. I'd like to read a short quote by Mark Cahill here:

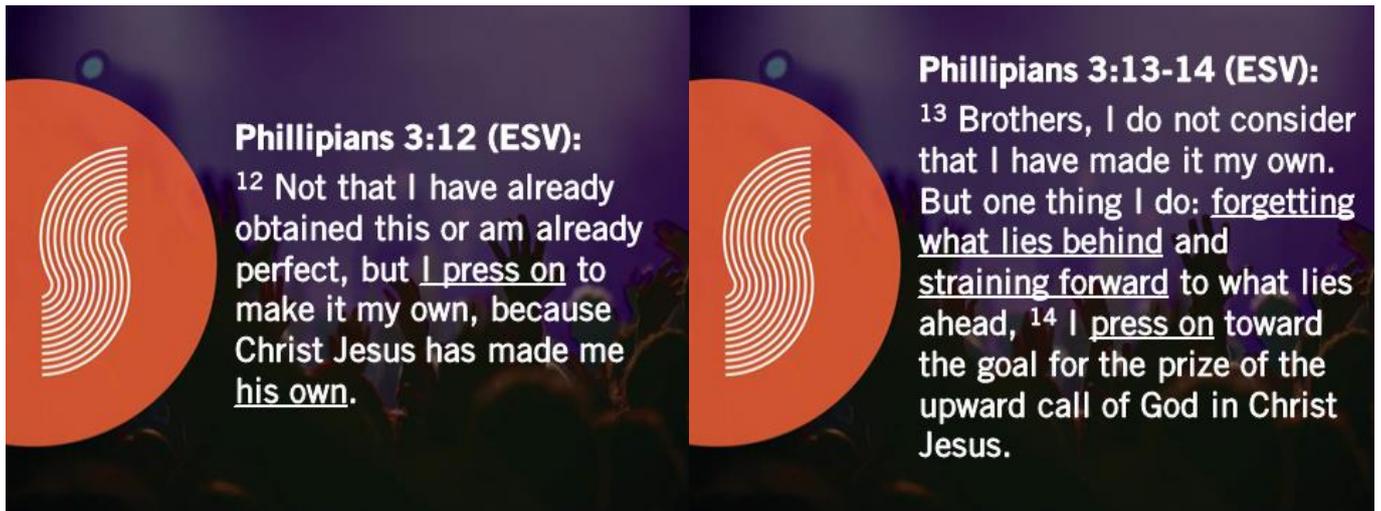
"Once while I was still teaching, I had to hire a guy to speak at an athletic banquet, so I hired this ex-Major League Baseball player. It was a Christian school, and we wanted someone with a strong testimony to challenge the students and parents to boldly stand for Jesus Christ. So, I asked him what he was doing for a living. He told me that he worked for a cable company and installed cable TV in people's homes. I asked why would you be doing that? I am not the smartest guy in the world sometimes! I thought that every ex-pro athlete should be rolling in the dough. And of course reality is very different from our perception. He looked at me and said, the reason I install cable TV is to get into more people's homes so I can tell them the truth about eternity and the truth about the crucified Savior of the world. I can't even begin to tell you the feeling I had inside of me when he told me his story. It was one of the most humbling moments of my entire life; this man had life figured out. It isn't that you go and lay cable to feed the family and pay the bills, but that you go into people's homes to plant seeds for the Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time God allows you to get a paycheck."

Do we get the shift here? From "me", and "mine", to His purpose! The ultimate "goodfruit"!

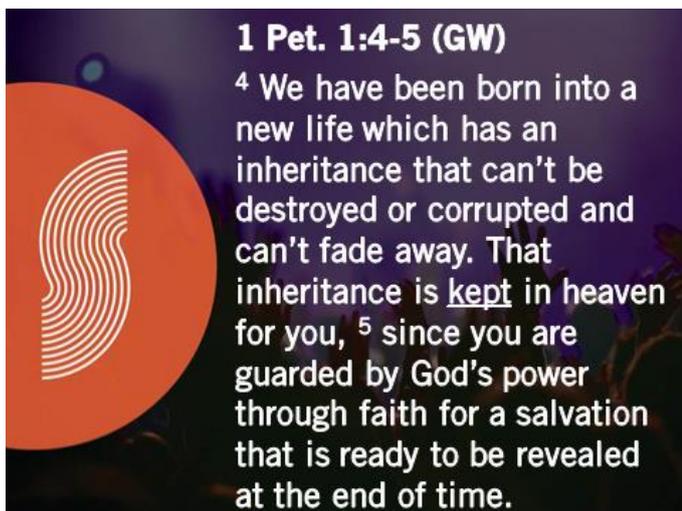


As we've said before, this time on earth is a very small part of eternity, but during it we are prepared for the rest of eternity - as the Bride of Christ!

Would the world not be a much better place for everyone were we all to fulfil our purpose? Let each of us resolve to do as the Apostle Paul did as he spoke about his life's purpose - he was talking about the resurrection from the dead:



Look at what Peter has to say about this:



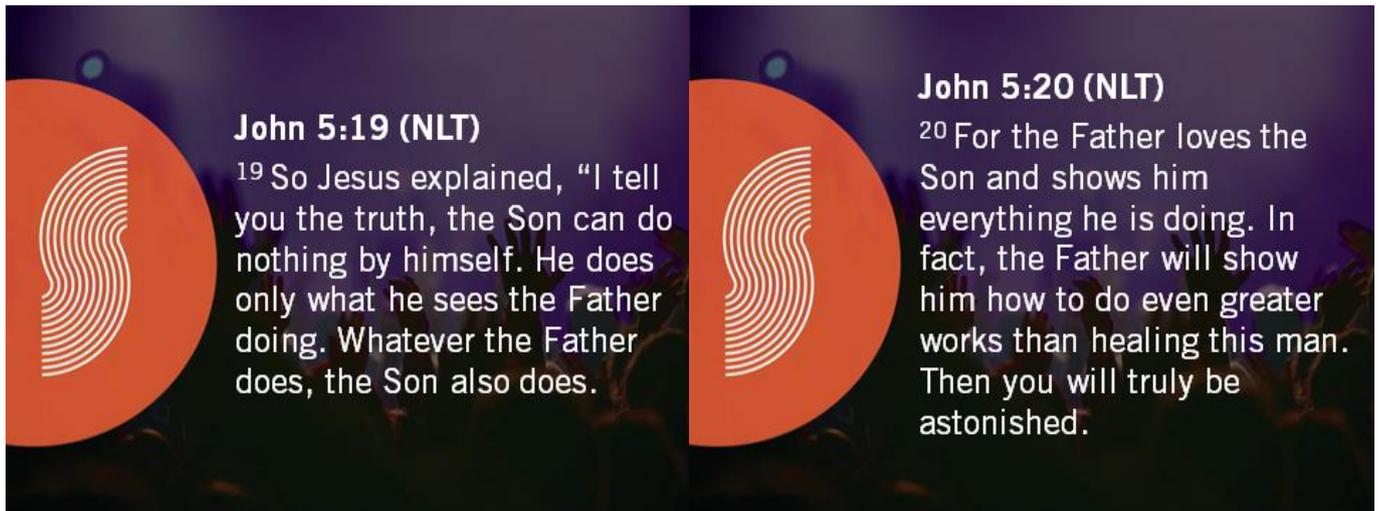
What incredible, and wonderfully reassuring, promises!

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To get practical now, how can we make sure that we are actually fulfilling our purpose?



We see from this (and many other) Scripture that we need to obey the Lord, and live as Christ did while He was here on earth - how did He live? He said that He did only what He heard from His Father:

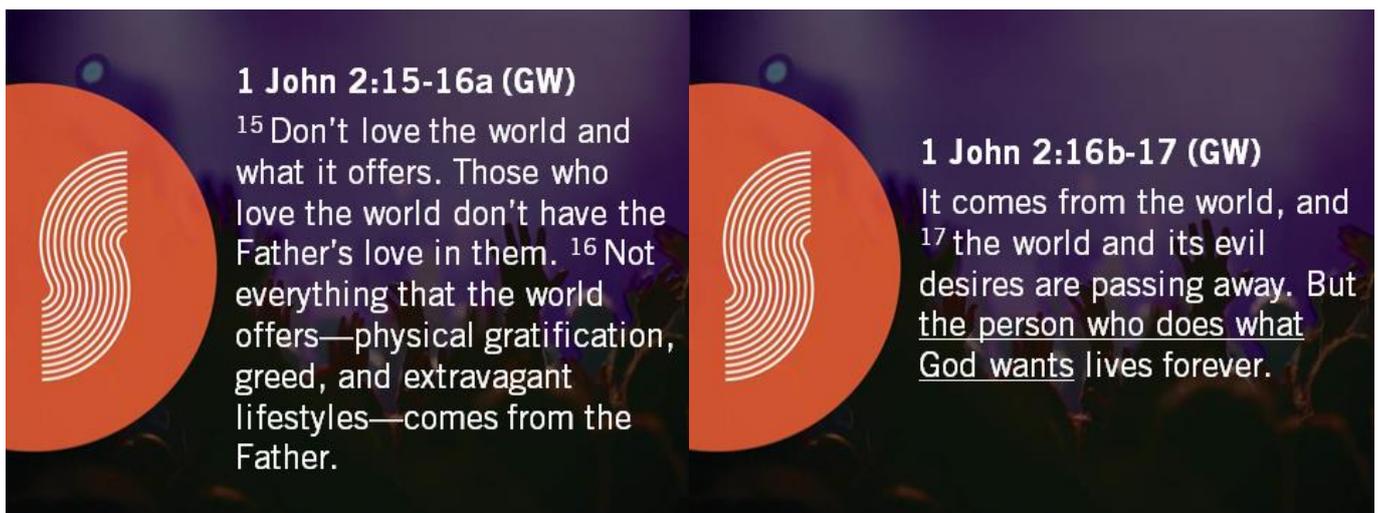


**John 5:19 (NLT)**  
<sup>19</sup> So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does."

**John 5:20 (NLT)**  
<sup>20</sup> For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished.

See how He shows us the way? He listened to, and obeyed His Father - we need to do the same...

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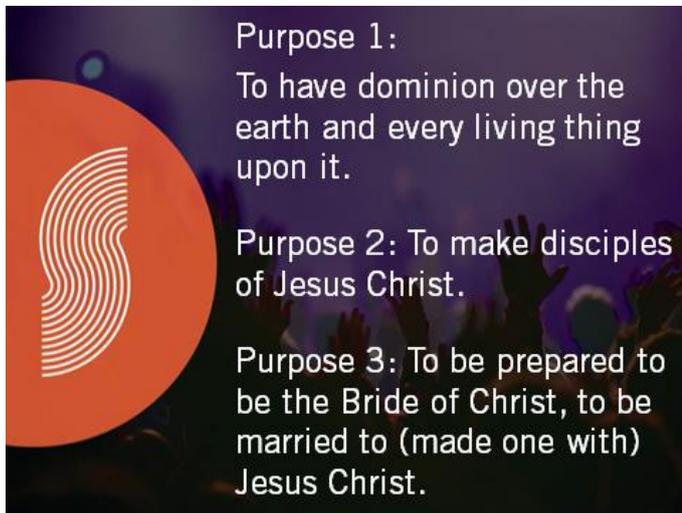


**1 John 2:15-16a (GW)**  
<sup>15</sup> Don't love the world and what it offers. Those who love the world don't have the Father's love in them. <sup>16</sup> Not everything that the world offers—physical gratification, greed, and extravagant lifestyles—comes from the Father.

**1 John 2:16b-17 (GW)**  
It comes from the world, and <sup>17</sup> the world and its evil desires are passing away. But the person who does what God wants lives forever.

Remember that the word *love* in the Christian context has the sense of giving one's life for its object - so John is warning that we should not give our lives to those things that are not in the Lord's will.

God knows... so let's consult Him about absolutely everything - He knows what is going on in our lives anyway, even our most secret thoughts; so why try to hide anything? Rather make Him the solution to every situation.



To sum up, practically speaking then, how do we go about achieving these three purposes in a Biblically accurate way?

- We need to be in relationship with Christ (be His disciple),
- We need to know what God's promises and commands (principles) are (read Scripture with the help of the Holy Spirit),
- We need to live in a way that demonstrates that we believe what the Lord has said - and that prepares us as His Bride.

Again, as I have said for the last two weeks, each of us needs to understand that we are not a mistake, that we have been created by God for this time and place, and that we do have a purpose here on the earth - but even more so, that we have an eternal purpose and destiny. God knows.

Trust Him to lead and guide you as you fix your hope in the fact that He knows you by name, and that His will for you is perfect - He always knows best!

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Pray for the congregation - particularly for a revelation of the purpose that Jesus Christ holds before us, and that our best response is one of love for Him, trust in Him, and obedience to Him.

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