

WHY AM I HERE?

(Part I)

Acts 9:3–6, 20:17–24

Woodland Park Church of Christ
4 August 2019

Someone once said that the two most significant days in a person's life are –

1. The day s/he is born.
2. The day s/he figures out why they were born.

One really cannot grow and develop until s/he determines their purpose.

Before becoming the great Apostle, Paul was Saul of Tarsus, a chief persecutor of the church.

Recall how Saul–

- ▶ Consented to the death of Stephen, who was stoned to death after he recounted the rebellious and murderous ways of the Jews. Acts 7:51–8:1

- ▶ Sought and received authority of the high priest to bring men and women of “the Way” in Damascus back to Jerusalem bound. Acts 9:1–2

“Lord, what do you want me to do?”

Acts 9:6

Not fearing the response, Saul received & obediently followed the Lord’s direction in seeking what he would be directed to do.

Saul’s purpose was shared with Ananias, the disciple who was understandably reluctant to take part in Saul’s conversion:


- ▶ *“Go, for **he is a chosen vessel of Mine** to bear My name before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel.” Acts 9:15*

Saul's life took a dramatic turn once he determined his purpose in life.

He would never be the same.

The things he once did no longer moved, bound, or excited him.

Between Saul's encounter with the Lord on the Damascus Road (i.e, after he realized his purpose) until his meeting with the Ephesian elders at Miletus (**Acts 20:17–38**), his life had taken a 180° turn.

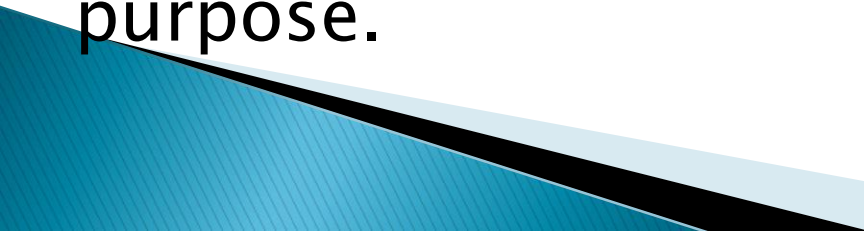


Unfortunately, many live a very long time before they find their purpose for living.

Sadder still, too many **spend their whole** lives without ever figuring out why God put them here.

Once we “figure it out,” life takes on a whole new meaning—we live with a sense of purpose and move with a sense of urgency.

Rick Warren’s book *The Purpose Driven Life* has sold over 35 million copies, which tends to illustrate the importance of determining purpose.



God gives us various gifts and skills to provide for ourselves and support the causes we hold dear and champion. He expects us to do so.

Great to use these gifts to the best of our ability. In a sense, one may conclude that this is his or her purpose for living.

There is far more to it than that.

Whatever we have or how ever high we may rise or aspire to in this life, it is always about serving and honoring God.

*And the LORD spoke to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Let My people go, **that they may serve Me.**” Exodus 8:1*

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:19

I. Finding Purpose Provides Direction and a Sense of Being

People spend a lot of time meandering and wandering through life without accomplishing much. In fact, many look back on many of their days and realize they did not accomplish much or wishing they had made better use of their time.

Immediately, he (Saul) preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He (Christ) is the Son of God.” Acts 9:20

Understanding our purpose helps us to effectively prioritize and utilize –

- ▶ Talent(s)
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Affection

When we have direction and purpose (and add discipline), we are less likely to waste time or become distracted.

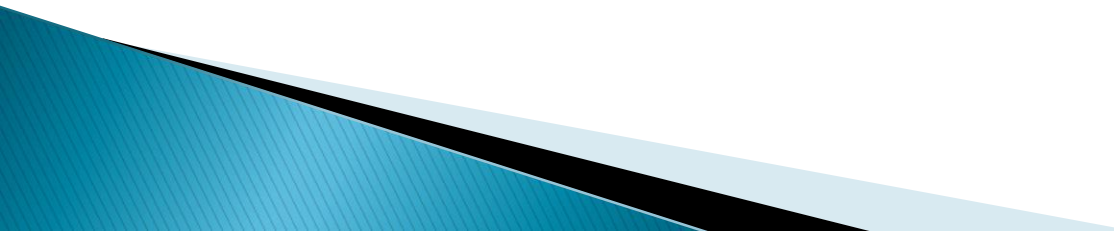
Someone once said, “We keep our eyes on the prize.”

Listen to the 12-year-old, precocious Jesus after his parents expressed their concern after looking for him for three days–

“Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

Luke 2:49

Undergraduate Experience

- ▶ Determined a major
 - ▶ Copy of the degree syllabus/course curriculum
 - ▶ Dared not stray
 - ▶ On the 3.5 to 4 year plan
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II. Challenges and Opposition Don't Deter Us

Threats and perils to Paul were immediate, frequent and unrelenting –

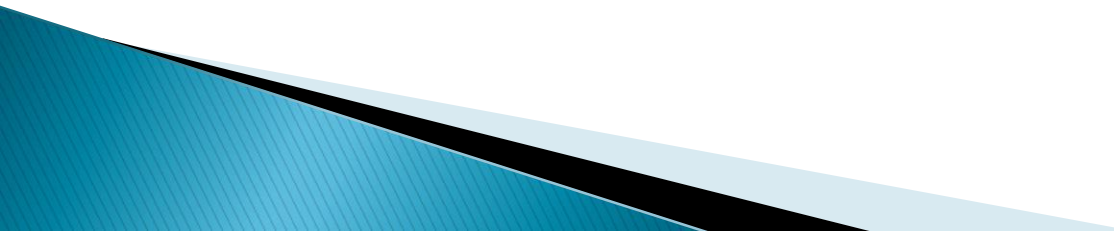
- ▶ **Damascus:** Jews' plot on his life (Acts 9:23–25);
- ▶ **Jerusalem:** Hellenists' attempt to kill him (Acts 9:28–30);
- ▶ **Antioch (Pisidia):** Jews stirred up the devout women and leading men and expelled Paul and Barnabas from their region (Acts 13:49–50);

- ▶ **Iconium:** Violent attempt by Gentiles and Jews with their leaders to abuse and stone Paul and Barnabas (**Acts 14:4–6**);
- ▶ **Lystra (Lycaonia):** Jews from Antioch and Iconium tracked down and stoned Paul, dragged him out of the city, and left him for dead (**Acts 14:19–20**).

These are the hardship and perils Paul met from his conversion through his first missionary work. **He would endure a great many more, yet remain unfazed!**

To wrap up his first missionary campaign, Paul returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch; strengthened the souls of the disciples; and exhorted them to continue in the faith.
See **Acts 14:21–22**.


Point → Like Paul, we can (must) remain undeterred and undaunted in fulfilling our purpose.



“We must, through many tribulations, enter the kingdom of God.” Acts 14:22

Path to fulfilling purpose may not be easy or accommodating, but we can meet our destiny.

Perseverance and faith have always marked the life of godly people who have successfully fulfilled their purpose. **See Psalm 34:19**



Lord's Invitation Extended to All

▶ Be added to the Lord's body

Hear the gospel (Acts 15:7);

Believe the gospel (Acts 8:37,
15:7);

Repent of sins (Acts 2:38);

Confess Christ (Acts 8:37);

Be baptized for the remission
of sin (Acts 2:38);

or

Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

- ▶ **Be reconciled unto the Lord (1 John 1:8–9); or**
- ▶ **Desire prayer (James 5:16).**

LIVE VICTORIOUSLY BLESSED!

