

Lecture #4: Finding Purpose

A person who has no goal in life will slip. So everyone should have goals, but what is God's purpose and will for our lives, and how do we find out about His purpose?

God communicates with us because He loves us and wants us to experience the peace and freedom that come from knowing Him in an intimate way. This knowledge will help us avoid sin.

To understand God's purpose in our lives, there is a four-step process we should follow:

1. Accept God's Word

There are many ways God can speak to us.

- The Scriptures – the cornerstone of knowing God's will
- The Holy Spirit and prayers – the Holy Spirit inside us will guide us and open our heart to understand God's plan (John 14:26 and 16:13).
- Godly counsel – discussions with a priest or a mature Christian friend can often clarify the pros and cons of the different choices (Proverbs 20:18, 24:6, and 27:9).
- Circumstances – these can be an indicator of God's will.
- Our conscience – a sensitive conscience is a good guide in discerning the right decision.

2. Distinguish His Voice

- We can be sure that when God speaks, His message is truthful. God's will is consistent with His character, and is included in His promises.
- Spend time alone with God in His Word to understand His message (Psalm 119:11)
- If we are unsure about a message we receive, we should ask ourselves:
 - Is this decision consistent with the Bible?
 - Is this a wise decision?
 - Can I pray about this matter? What I can not pray about is not to be considered an option.
 - Is my father of confession in agreement with this decision?
 - Can I honestly ask God to enable me to achieve it?
 - Do I have genuine peace about it?
 - Does it fit who I am in Christ?
 - Does it coincide with God's overall plan for my life?
 - If I take this decision, will I honor God?

3. Receive His Message

In order to receive God's message, we need to be prepared to hear Him. If we are not hearing His voice, we need to examine the reasons. There are several factors that can lead to this lack of clarity in receiving God's plan.

- Being busy – this is often the issue. We need to find a quiet time to read and meditate on the scriptures in order to hear God's voice. (Luke 10:38-40 and Isaiah 30:15)
- Ignorance of God's principles – we live in a very influential culture, and we need God's strength and wisdom to make the right choices in life.
- Influence of others – friends always have plenty of advice, but is it in line with God's will?
- Feeling of unworthiness – we feel we do not deserve anything. Note the story of Moses (Exodus 3:10-11) and Gideon (Judges 6:12-15).
- Doubt – we must trust God's ability to provide guidance (Hebrews 11:6).
- Wrong motives – God will not answer our prayers if we have wrong motives (James 4:3).
- Fear – fear of what God wants us to do, or fear of failure.
- Self will – we have already decided what we want to do without waiting for God's guidance.
- Willful known sin – we have an area of stubborn disobedience in our life.
- Rejecting the means – keep an open mind about the means by which God will answer our prayer.

4. Follow His Guidance

When God speaks to us, we must decide whether or not we will follow His guidance. God offers His Counsel not to complicate our lives, but because He wants us to live in the comfort and assurance of His never-ending love. (Luke 11:11-13)

Knowing this, we can place our trust in God's instructions. God sent the Holy Spirit to be our guide and our teacher (John 14:26 and John 16:7-13).

Note: We cannot learn to listen to God by simply listening to a sermon. You must learn by practicing. We must spend time alone with God, so that we learn to hear His voice. Also, God will not reveal His plan in our lives all at once but in steps. Discovering God's will does not happen overnight, so we must be patient and trust His guidance

Once God has spoken, we should know exactly where we stand. And now that we know His will, are we willing to follow?

