

## Talk It Over

## I CHOOSE

(Week 1)

### Purpose over Popularity

#### SMALL TALK

1. Have you ever been called a people-pleaser? Why or why not?
2. Jock, nerd, rocker, gangsta, gamer, cheerleader, (other)—which high school stereotype had you pegged?

#### VIEWPOINT

3. **READ Galatians 1:10:** What are some ways you can think of that living for the approval of people is problematic?

**Galatians 1:10 (NIV)** Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

*People tend to mis-associate their importance or significance with what they perceive that people think of them. But our significance, or our value, or individual worth is to be understood in relationship to God. We have significance because we are loved by God, saved by God, called by God, and filled by God.*

*Paul agreed with the Greek Philosophers that “In God we live move and have our being”, but understood this through what the Gospel has done for us. See Acts 17:28.*

*When we aim toward being a people pleaser, we will compromise our God given purpose.*

4. **READ Philippians 1:21:** What was Paul's purpose, his goal, his “reason for living”? What does that look like?

**Philippians 1:21 (NLT)** For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.

*To those who don't believe in God, [they think] life on earth is all there is, and so it is natural for them to strive for this world's values: money, popularity, power, pleasure, and prestige. For Paul, however, to live meant to develop eternal values and to tell others about Christ, who alone could help them see life from an eternal perspective. Paul's whole purpose in life was to speak out boldly for Christ and to become more like him. Thus, Paul could confidently say that dying would be even better than living, because in death he would be removed from worldly troubles, and he would see Christ face to face (1 John 3:2,3). If you're not ready to die, then you're not ready to live. Make certain of your eternal destiny; then you will be free to serve—devoting*

*your life to what really counts, without fear of death.*

*Life Application Study Bible.*

5. **READ Hebrews 11:24-26:** Compare and contrast Moses' story with cultural norms and modern success stories?

**Hebrews 11:24-26 (NIV) {24}** By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. {25} He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. {26} He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

*Moses became one of Israel's greatest leaders, a prophet and a lawgiver. But when he was born, his people were slaves in Egypt, and the Egyptian officials had ordered that all Hebrew baby boys were to be killed. Moses was spared, however, and Pharaoh's daughter raised Moses in Pharaoh's own household (Exodus 1-2)! It took faith for Moses to give up his place in the palace, but he could do it because he saw the fleeting nature of great wealth and prestige. It is easy to be deceived by the temporary benefits of wealth, popularity, status, and achievement, and to be blind to the long-range benefits of God's Kingdom. Faith helps us look beyond the world's value system to see the eternal values of God's Kingdom.*

*Life Application Study Bible.*

6. **READ Nehemiah 6:1-3:** To what distraction do you need to say, "I'm doing a great work; I can't come down." What great work are you doing (or God is calling you to do)?

**Nehemiah 6:1-3 (NIV) {1}** When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it--though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates-- {2} Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: "Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono." But they were scheming to harm me; {3} so I sent messengers to them with this reply: "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?"

*I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Nehemiah would not divert time and effort from the Lord's work for discussions with his enemies that he knew would be fruitless at best and probably dangerous to him as well.*

*ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version.*

## GETTING PERSONAL

7. What wrong reason for living (popularity, pleasure, power, possessions, etc.) distracts you from your designed purpose, or reason for living? What one thing can you do to shift to "the greater value" (Hebrews 11:26) for the sake of Christ?

## MAKING PROGRESS

8. One of our core statements is: "Live with eternal significance." Reflect on the following:

My main purpose is \_\_\_\_\_.

My main distraction is \_\_\_\_\_.

To choose purpose, I will \_\_\_\_\_.

August 4, 2019

## **PURPOSE OVER POPULARITY**

Series: I CHOOSE (WEEK 1)

Today we're starting a brand new message series and it's called I Choose.

### *About This Series:*

*We are shaped by many factors: our genetics, experiences, relationships, perceptions, and beliefs, to name a few. But our CHOICES matter far more than we realize.*

Today we are going to look at choosing PURPOSE over Popularity.

Actually, we will be looking at choosing the right PURPOSE over a number of things. Just about everything that will pull you off your God designed purpose.

### **I. What is your REASON for LIVIING?**

There's an old country song written by Dallas Frazier that was sung by a number of well-known artists that goes ...

*There goes my reason for living...  
there goes my everything.*

The song is about a someone who has lost his or her one reason for living—his or her one true love. Without him or her, the song implies that life isn't worth living. A lot of people identified with this “tear jerker” “There goes my everything.”

Although, our title this morning is “I choose purpose over popularity”, preparing for this message took me all over many topics, many reasons for living. It is important that we choose the

right purpose. Popularity isn't it, and neither is the pursuit of power, prestige, pleasures, just to name a few. The problem is that these things don't bring about the satisfaction that we thought they would. It is an important question: What is your reason for living?

The Apostle Paul wrote about his reason for living, his "everything".

*Philippians 1:21 (NLT) For to me, living means living for Christ...*

## II. Lack of purpose can be DEADLY

John Beukema tells the following story: I attended a community prayer breakfast and sat at a table with a group of men I didn't know. In the course of our conversation, the subject of retirement came up. The man sitting next to me, who appeared to be in his early fifties, was quite excited by the prospect. He said how much he was looking forward to the end of his career and related a conversation he had with his wife that morning.

"My wife asked, 'What are you going to do when you retire?' I told her, 'I'm going to sit on the couch and watch TV all day every day.'"

The table was silent, but I couldn't keep quiet for long. "If you do that," I said, "you'll be dead in a year."

He looked at me, wide-eyed, and asked why.

I told him, "If the lack of purpose in your life doesn't kill you first, your wife will."

## III. The wrong PURPOSE needs to be EXPOSED and DENIED.

Have you ever thought about what your reason for living is? If someone were to ask you this question, What is your reason for living? What is your purpose in life? What would your answer be? Sometimes people have trouble answering this question truthfully. **We fool ourselves.** We say what we think the answer

should be, instead of what our lifestyle actually reveals to be our true reason for living.

Today you won't be put on the spot. You don't have to tell anyone. You only have to answer for yourself. Here are three questions; take a moment to think about the answer.

#### REFLECT

1. When you wake up in the morning, what is the first thing you think about?
2. During the day, what do you spend most of your time thinking about?
3. As you fall asleep at night, what tends to dominate your thoughts?

More than likely, the answer to all three questions is the same, and that is your reason for living.

How will you live the one and only beautiful life that God has given you? If you're 63 or 89 years old, it's not too late. If you're 16 or 22, it's not too early. How will you live the one and only beautiful life that God has given you?

For a really good and beautiful life, we need to live according to our design, and God is calling us each to a specific purpose we are uniquely suited for.

#### REFLECT:

If you don't know the purpose of a thing, ask the creator of the thing.

Left to our own devices, self is bent toward self-destruction. We are like cars that crave sugar water for fuel. I'm no mechanic, but I've heard that's really bad for a car! We are like that! We have

dangerous desires inside that are actually opposed to our design. What this means for us now is that looking inwardly to figure out what we are created for is rather unreliable for us because of sin. So.... wouldn't it be a good idea to ask our creator? He knows how we have been designed to function best.

#### **IV. Living for the approval of PEOPLE keeps you from the PURPOSES of God.**

I want you to imagine something. Are you ready? Imagine this for just a moment. Imagine that everyone likes you, everyone approves of you. No matter what you do, everyone thinks you're awesome. Imagine that! Did you enjoy that? This side of heaven that will never happen! It is completely impossible. No matter what you do, you cannot please everyone.

Now, I want you to imagine not only something that can happen, but something God wants this to happen. For those of you who are Jesus followers, imagine being so consumed with pleasing God that the approval of other people doesn't mean so much to you. Imagine waking up every single day with passion and purpose in your life, knowing deep down you are doing what you were created to do. Imagine your reason for living fuels you and the approval of others does not distract you. Can you imagine that? Not only is that possible, I believe that's what God wants for every single one of us.

*Galatians 1:10 (NLT) Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.*

We are designed for relationships. When God said "It is not good that man is alone" it was just before he made EVE for Adam.

Although we are designed for relationships, we are not designed for self-centered glory in relationships. A person is designed in the image of God. We are to be like God in reflection of who he is, giving him honor in the way we reflect him. We are literally designed to live for the glory of God. Not because God is an egotist, no, that isn't it. He is completely whole, and healthy. Giving glory to God causes us to function best. We function best when our lives bring him glory.

REFLECT:

Our aim for the approval of others will keep us from the purposes of God.

Our aim for the approval of God will cause us to love and serve others.

My marriage is happier when I aim my life toward God. I'm happier when I choose the right reason for living. Everyone around me is happier when I am living for Christ! Everyone around me is more miserable when I am living for me! When anything switches and I start to live to bring myself glory, I become less than I'm created for, I become self-centered, and the glory there is no glory; it becomes dark fast.

*1 Peter 5:5 (NLT) "God opposes the proud but favors the humble."*

God stands opposed to the proud. If there is anything I don't want, it is for the Almighty to stand opposed to me. God gives grace to the humble. When I focus on God more, and less on myself, I receive more grace. I stand in his favor and receive his blessings. When I focus on me more, and less on God, darkness creeps in.

REFLECT:

You will invest your life in something,  
or you will throw it away on nothing.  
Choose that something well.  
You are designed to thrive by bringing God the honor he deserves.

[Steve May wrote] A football coach might say that all day long he thinks about winning a championship—that is his reason for living. A novelist might say that all day she thinks about finishing her book—that is her reason for living. A parent might say that all day long he or she thinks of how to take care of the children—that is their reason for living. Others might have more immodest goals: some may say they think about food all day long, or sex, or money, or their problems, or taking the next drink, or their career. Whatever you think about all day long—that is your reason for living.

Is it a good reason? Here's an easy way to tell. Ask yourself: is it worth dying for? Is your job worth dying for? Is a little money worth dying for? Is a pizza worth dying for? Is what you're living for worth dying for?

***Philippians 1:21 (NLT)** For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.*

REFLECT:

My main purpose is \_\_\_\_\_.

My main distraction is \_\_\_\_\_.

To choose purpose, I will \_\_\_\_\_.

Dear God,

There is power in purpose—especially Your purpose. I CHOOSE to refocus my attention to the desire, design, and direction you

have for my life. Help me to make pleasing You the main thing.  
Amen.