

## Equipped to discover God's purposes for you (part one)

The builder spread out the house plans for us to see. At last! We now had a clearer idea of the relative size of the rooms, where the doors and windows would be, and how many electric sockets we would have. We could tell from the plans the number of bedrooms and public rooms that would be in the house, as well as seeing it was to be built on two levels. Armed with these and other details, we were ready to fill in the blanks in terms of furniture, window treatments, lighting, and all the other things that are needed to turn a house into a home - or more precisely, *our* home. But this would have been impossible if we hadn't first seen the builder's plan. Before we could personalize the details, we had to have accurate information about the sort of structure he had in mind. The same is true when we think about God's purposes for our lives. We want to zero in on the details, those things that concern us personally, but, like the building of our house, it pays to take time to study the plans, or purposes, God has already drawn up for us. Here are some of them...

**Purpose #1 is to believe.** In the gospel of John, the people ask Jesus what God wants them to do and Jesus replies: "*This is what God wants you to do: Believe in the one he has sent*".<sup>1</sup> He was talking about Himself. Have you believed in Jesus Christ? Not just believed things *about* Him, but placed your faith *in* Him as the only one who can bring you into a right relationship with God. This is the essential starting point for living out all the other purposes He has for you.

**Purpose #2 is to be Spirit-filled.**<sup>2</sup> Being Spirit-filled is for all followers of Jesus Christ and involves allowing Him access to *every* part of our lives, letting Him show us the changes that need to be made, attitudes that need to be renewed, bad habits that need to be broken. When we allow Him to work fully in our lives, He convicts us, directs us, and empowers us to live in a right way. Being Spirit-filled is not a one off event, but a life-long process, where we choose to give Him control on an ongoing basis.

**Purpose #3 is to obey those in authority.** Hey, this can be a tough one for some of us! There will be times when we might need to make a choice when human authority cuts across God's authority but, generally speaking, it is God's will for us to wholeheartedly obey those in authority over us.<sup>3</sup> We're also encouraged to do this for the Lord's sake.<sup>4</sup> How well are you following through on this purpose that God has for you?

**Purpose #4 is to live a sexually pure life.** The Bible tells us that God wants us to be holy and explains that this means avoiding sexual immorality by exercising self-control.<sup>5</sup> Where might you need to exercise self-control? In your choice of reading material? DVDs? In your relationships? Living a sexually pure life might mean making tough decisions, but God's purposes for us are very practical and always achievable with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**Purpose #5 is to be joyful, prayerful, and thankful - always.** Sounds a tall order, right? But this is part of God's purposes for those who follow Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> Being joyful is not the same as being happy. Happiness depends on our circumstances; joyfulness is a choice we make which is rooted in confidence in God.

When our prayers appear to go unanswered, it's tempting to let up on talking to God. But, it's His purpose for us that we pray continually. Speak to Him at various points throughout the day, about all kinds of things, and don't be tempted to give up at the first sign of difficulty.

And the icing on the cake: give thanks in all circumstances. Are you giving thanks to God on a regular basis? Why not do so now? You'll be living out one of His purposes for you!

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<sup>1</sup> John 6:28 (NLT)

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 5:17

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 6:6

<sup>4</sup> 1 Peter 2:13-15

<sup>5</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4

<sup>6</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18