



40 Days of Purpose

Week 6 – Evangelism: You Were Made for a Mission

Notes: This Bible Study is taken from the 40 Days of Purpose Weekly Lessons guide available from www.purposedriven.com. The Scripture references in this Bible study are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

Welcome to our final week of this series of studies on the *Purpose Driven Life*. My goal has been to introduce you to God's five purposes for your life. There's much more we could study about these, so I hope you'll decide to keep learning about them for the rest of your life. I hope you've enjoyed reading the daily readings in the *Purpose Driven Life*. I encourage you to reread it, maybe annually, to refresh your memory on what life is really all about.

Since this is our last session together, before we look at God's fifth purpose for your life, I want to encourage our group to do two things.

1. Plan a celebration. Have a party. Did you know God loves parties? Jesus went to a lot of parties while He was here on earth. And the Bible says every time a person becomes a believer, the angels celebrate and have a party in heaven. So, at the end of this study, we should plan to get together again just to celebrate what God has done in our lives and in our church over the past few weeks.
2. Talk about the future. Before we close this session, let's discuss the future of this class. While this series is completed, I hope you've discovered the value of being a part of a group, and I hope you'll choose to continue on together. Small group fellowship is an essential habit for living a healthy, balanced Christian life.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this last session we're going to look at God's fifth purpose for your life. What does John 17:18 have to say about what that fifth purpose is?

John 17:18 (Msg.) – *"In the same way that you gave Me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world."*

God made us and save us for a mission.

Circle the phrase "in the world." How is the mission in the world that God has given us different from the ministry in the church?

God wants each of us to have a ministry in His Church, through which we serve other believers. God also wants us to have a mission in the world, through which we share with unbelievers.

A. A review

In these past weeks, we've tried to clarify and redefine five good Bible words that have been watered down and misused...

How does worship mean more than music?

Worship means living to bring pleasure to God.

How does fellowship means more than coffee and casual conversation?

Fellowship means sharing our lives together.

How does discipleship means more than just going to church?

Discipleship means becoming like Jesus in the way I think, feel, and act.

How is ministry not just for pastors and missionaries?

Every Christian is called to serve and minister to others.

B. Misperceptions about evangelism

This week we look at another word that has lost its original meaning: evangelism. When it comes to evangelism, both believers and unbelievers have something in common: they're both afraid of it.

Why does evangelism scare many Christians?

We imagine television evangelists, strangers coming to your home at dinnertime and interrupting your evening, or someone preaching with a bullhorn from a street corner.

C. The good news about evangelism

But the word evangelism is just the Greek word that means “good news.” That’s all it means: good news.

What does God want us to do with the good news about what Jesus did for us?

Once you know God’s other four purposes for your life, God wants you to share the good news with others. That’s all there is to it. The same mission Christ had—helping people find God—He has now given to us.

How did you discover the good news about Jesus yourself?

Someone had to tell you. If someone hadn’t cared enough to tell you, you’d be living without God right now. You would be missing the greatest news in the world. All God wants us to do is to pass on this good news to others.

Is it necessary to be spiritually mature, or a Bible scholar to share the good news with others?

All you have to know is that Jesus has made a difference in your life. It’s not important to know a whole lot of information; it’s about simply loving people enough to tell them about Jesus.

Is evangelism something you do by yourself?

It can be but God doesn’t expect you to fulfill your mission on your own. He gives us other Christians to support us. In fact, evangelism is something you can do as a group...

I Corinthians 3:9 (NLT) - *“We work together as partners who belong to God.”*

In this session we’ll look at how our group can reach out together in love to those who don’t know Jesus. God has given us a wonderful example in Luke chapter 5: a story of a group of friends who brought someone in need to Jesus.

II. FOUR KEYS TO FULFILLING GOD’S MISSION IN THE WORLD

Let’s look at Luke 5:17 from the Message paraphrase.

“One day as [Jesus] was teaching, Pharisees and religion teachers were sitting around. They had come from nearly every village in Galilee and Judea, even as far away as Jerusalem, to be there. The healing power of God was on him. Some men arrived carrying a paraplegic on a stretcher. They were looking for a way to get into the house and set him before Jesus.”

“When they couldn’t find a way in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof, removed some tiles, and let him down in the middle of everyone, right in front of Jesus. Impressed by their bold belief, he said, ‘Friend, I forgive your sins.’ That set the religion scholars and Pharisees buzzing. ‘Who does he think he is? That’s blasphemous talk. God and only God can forgive sins.’

“Jesus knew exactly what they were thinking and said, ‘Why all this gossipy whispering? Which is simpler: to say “I forgive your sins,” or to say “Get up and start walking”?’

“Well, just so it’s clear that I’m the Son of Man and authorized to do either, or both....’ He now spoke directly to the paraplegic: ‘Get up. Take your bedroll and go home.’ Without a moment’s hesitation, he did it—got up, took his blanket, and left for home, giving glory to God all the way.”

“The people rubbed their eyes, incredulous—and then also gave glory to God. Awestruck, they said, ‘We’ve never seen anything like that!’” - Luke 5:17-26 (Msg.)

In this great little story God gives us four keys to how your group can reach out to others, and how you can fulfill your God-given mission in the world.

A. They became **CONCERNED** for their hurting friend.

What did the men who carried their paraplegic friend to Jesus demonstrate by doing this?

These men demonstrated compassion for their friend. This small group cared enough for a helpless friend to do something about his pain. Compassion is not a feeling; it is love in action. **So they became CONCERNED for their hurting friend.**

1. Why love is important

Why is love so important?

Love opens the door for you to share Christ. People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. You must love people, look for their needs, and listen for the areas in which they are struggling. Only then can you show how Jesus can meet that need. When people know you genuinely care for them, they are far more open to hearing the Good News about Jesus. If you care, you’ll take the time to be aware...

Romans 15:2 (GW) - *“We should all be concerned about our neighbor and the good things that will build up his faith.”*

How may we increase our opportunities to love people who need to now the Lord?

A practical way to do this is to spend more time with non-Christians. Remember in session 2 we talked about not isolating ourselves from people who need Jesus. This is a real problem. The longer you are a Christian, the fewer non-Christians you tend to know, because you spend most of your time involved in Christian activities.

2. Starting with prayer

What does Colossians 4:3 have to say about what a small group can do to be successful at corporate evangelism?

Colossians 4:3 (NCV) - "... pray for us that God will give us an opportunity to tell people His message."

Prayer is essential to fulfilling your life mission.

What specific kinds of things should we pray for to prepare for evangelism?

1. Ask God to soften your heart and give you a real love for the unbelievers with whom you come in contact.
2. Ask God to give you and your group or class opportunities to invite others to your activities and tell them about Christ.
3. Ask God to soften the hearts of those you have the opportunity to reach.

How can we best find people with softened hearts that are ready to be open to God?

The way God usually does this is through problems and pain, so look around and ask, "Who's hurting?" That's probably the person you should try to reach first.

3. Ways to share our love

Can you think of any way a small group can work together to reach people for Christ?

One small group discovered they love to go to football games together, so they all bought season tickets. Then, to help fulfill their mission, they all pitched in and bought a couple more tickets to share. Each week they invited a non-Christian couple to go to the game with their group. At the game, they don't talk about Jesus; they just have fun and enjoy the game. They all pay special attention to the guest couple they've invited. At the end of the game, when the guest couple says, "Hey, this was fun. Thanks for inviting us," the group says, "You know, we all hang out together every Thursday night at Bob's house and do a little Bible study. Why don't you come join us this week?" Using this simple idea, that group has introduced more than 20 couples to Christ.

That's just one idea. There are hundreds of outreach ideas your group could think up. It starts with becoming concerned about unbelievers. It starts with being interested in more than just your group. You show love to outsiders and actively bring them in.

B. They believed Jesus WOULD SAVE their friend.

What does Luke 5:20 have to say about why Jesus saved to paraplegic man?

Luke 5:20 (NIV) - "When Jesus saw their faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'"

This is the principle of *faith*. Note that it doesn't say, "the sick man's faith," it says their faith. Jesus is talking about the faith of the small group who brought the man to Jesus. So the paraplegic man was saved because **they believed Jesus WOULD SAVE their friend.**

What was the significance in the fact that the man who was brought to Jesus was paralyzed?

He needed other people to bring him to Jesus. This is an important point, because a lot of people are paralyzed in life. They're paralyzed by fear, guilt, loneliness, or circumstances and problems. They can't get to Jesus on their own. They need us to bring them.

Do you know anybody that it appears as though their coming to Jesus would be the last thing they'd do? How should we regard them?

Look at what Hebrews 7:25 (TEV) says: *Jesus is "able, now and always, to save those who come to God through Him...."* No one is beyond the reach of God's love. God specializes in doing the impossible. Don't give up on anyone; have faith. It's the second key to your mission.

C. They didn't just pray for their friend; they BROUGHT Him to Jesus.

This same story is told in the book of Matthew... What does Matthew 9:2 have to say about what the men did who brought the paraplegic man to Jesus?

Matthew 9:2 (NCV) - they "brought to Jesus a man who was paralyzed and lying on a mat."

This is the principle of action. They had a plan and put it into action. If you're paralyzed, you can't come to Jesus on your own. Somebody has to bring you. **So, they didn't just pray for their friend; they BROUGHT Him to Jesus.**

Do most Christians practice the command in Colossians 4:5?

Colossians 4:5 (NIV) - *“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders, making the most of every opportunity.”*

No, most Christians do not look for opportunities to share their faith and invite people to church or a Bible study group. Most Christians are secret agent believers: they’ve never shared their faith. Someone once called them “Arctic River Christians”: frozen at the mouth.

What do you think about the statement, “My life is my witness. I don’t need to talk about Jesus’ love; I just live it.” Is this valid?

This statement is really pretty arrogant. It’s saying, “I live such a perfect example of being a Christian that people automatically fall on their knees and accept Christ.” Even Jesus had to talk about the Good News, and He was perfect. God wants audio/visual Christians. He wants you to walk the walk and talk the talk. Both are important.

What if a guy said to a girl, “Honey I love you and I’m committed to you. So let’s get married. But let’s keep it our little secret. We won’t talk about it in public or ever let anyone know we love each other.” What kind of commitment would that be?

That sounds like a pretty weak commitment. Let me be blunt: You love and are committed to Jesus as much as you are willing to talk about it to others.

What does Luke 14:23 have to say about whether we should be active or passive in our witness?

Luke 14:23 (NLT), Jesus says - *“Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full.”*

We’re not supposed to sit back and wait for people to come to church. We’re supposed to go after them.

Let me suggest a practical project: Today, during our group discussion time, each person should suggest the name of a non-believing co-worker, friend, or neighbor for whom you’d like your entire group to begin praying. Then pray for the courage to invite them to church this week, or plan a special event you could bring them to.

What is the great thing about helping a friend settle his or her eternal destiny?

Nothing in the world compares with the thrill of helping a friend settle his or her eternal destiny. You will make a friend forever. That’s why we must never give up, and that leads us to the last key to your mission from this story: the principle of persistence.

D. They didn’t let difficulties DISCOURAGE them.

Was it easy for the four men to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus?

When these men brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus, they couldn’t get in the door because the crowd blocked it. They may have been discouraged, but they didn’t give up. These guys had determination. Whatever it took, they were going to bring their friend to Jesus. **So, they didn’t let difficulties DISCOURAGE them.**

Picture this scene in your mind: They drag their paralyzed friend up on the roof and start pulling away the roof tiles. This creates quite a disturbance below where Jesus is quietly teaching. They tie off the corners of this guy’s mat and lower him down through the hole in the roof right in front of Jesus’ face. It was risky, bold, unusual, and costly. Was it worth it?

It was for them and it is for us... We should ask ourselves: “Are we willing to go through the roof for a friend?” Are you willing to do whatever it takes to reach people for Christ? Without Jesus, they have no hope in eternity. So as long as there is anyone in your community who doesn’t know Jesus, we and the church must continue to reach out and grow.

Why do we labor to grow the church?

We don’t grow a church for our benefit. We grow a church because Jesus wants everyone to know Him.

The Bible says, *“The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* (2 Peter 3:9, NKJV) Another translation of 2 Peter 3:9 (CEV) says, *“...God is patient, because He wants everyone to turn from sin and no one to be lost.”*

The church that doesn’t want to grow is really saying to the world, “We don’t care about you. You can go to hell.”

APPLICATION

Don’t get discouraged and don’t give up. Helping someone get into heaven is the greatest thing you can do for him or her.

Father, there are a lot of good things we can do with our lives that really aren’t going to matter 10 years or even a year from now. But helping other people get to know Jesus and secure a place in heaven will have eternal implications. I ask you to help us take this fifth purpose for our lives seriously: our mission of sharing Your Good News with others.

Will you pray with me? You can follow me in this prayer:

Dear God, please use me and use our group to reach for Jesus the people You've put around us. Help us be concerned for those who don't know You yet. Help us be consistent in praying for their salvation. We know You can save anyone and we believe no one is hopeless. No one is beyond the reach of Your love. So help us as a group to make plans to bring people to You. And help us not to get discouraged when people don't initially respond. We want people to be in heaven because of our group. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

As we close this six-week study, I want to thank you for participating. Let me encourage you to continue to love your church, pray for your church, support the church family financially, and serve in the church. Everything else on this earth will eventually vanish, but God's family, the Church, will last for eternity. The most significant thing you do with your life may be to join a church family and get involved in fulfilling God's five purposes for your life:

1. Bringing pleasure to God through worship
2. Experiencing life together through fellowship
3. Growing spiritually to be more like Christ through discipleship
4. Serving the needs of others through your ministry
5. Sharing the Good News through evangelism

God wants us to not only live purpose driven lives; He wants us to grow purpose driven churches.

Let me close with Acts 13:36. It says, "*David...served God's purpose in his generation.*" David did what was timeless: he served God's purposes. And he did it in a timely way: in his generation. He did that which never changes—God's purposes—in a constantly changing culture. He was both biblical and relevant, both contemporary and eternal.

My prayer for you is that people will be able to say about you that you served God's purpose in your generation.

Thanks for joining us. God bless.