

The Basics of Christianity

What is the Purpose of Life?

Acts 17:22-31

INTRODUCTION:

Acts 17:22-31 (NASB)

BODY:

I. Knowing There is a God.

Romans 1:20-25 (NASB)

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III. Obey God's Word.

Romans 3:23 (NASB)

Romans 6:23a (NASB)

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John 3:16 (NASB)

CONCLUSION:

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INTRODUCTION:

In our worldly culture, people lose sight of the meaning of life. They pursue many things, thinking that in them they will find meaning and purpose. Some of these pursuits include business success, wealth, good relationships, sex, entertainment, and doing good to others. People have testified that, while they achieved their goals of wealth, relationships, and pleasure, there was still a deep void inside, a feeling of emptiness that nothing seemed to fill.

Have you ever asked yourself the question, "**What is the purpose of my life?**" It is the age old question that men have always tried to answer. Every day we seem to go through the same old routine:

- Get out of bed.
- Eat breakfast.
- Drive to work.
- Work 4 hours.
- Eat lunch.
- Work 4 hours.
- Drive home.
- Catch up on tasks at home.
- Eat dinner.
- Watch TV.
- Go to bed. (Repeat)

Is that all there is to life? Why am I here? Why is mankind here?

This is a question that I personally have pondered. It seemed to me that there had to be a purpose of life. If there is a purpose to life, then I would like to know what it is and make sure that before I die, I have spent a productive life doing what I was born to do.

It is not like there are no answers to this question out there. One of the answers that summarizes a more common belief is from an old beer commercial. It goes, "**You only go around once in life so grab all the gusto you can**".

The idea behind that is that pleasure is the only thing that is important. The purpose of life is to have pleasure. After all, when you die it will all be over.

This can work itself out in two ways:

1. One would be through **addiction**.

- Your addiction could be a philosophy that life is just one big party. That is why it is not surprising that it is a part of a beer commercial.
 - Alcohol.
 - Gambling.
 - Drugs.
 - Immorality.
 - Excessive fanaticism in your work, sports, or hobbies.
2. Another way that the search for self pleasure could exhibit itself is through **materialism**.
- The old saying is that you need to "Keep up with the Jones".
 - We need the biggest house, the fastest car, the biggest boat, the most expensive wedding ring.

When people are seeking pleasure by addiction and materialism, that becomes the purpose of their life. They are willing to do anything that seems to bring them pleasure. It is a selfish lifestyle considering only themselves. Often these lead to a great cost. In the search for pleasure, we destroy our bodies, our minds, our jobs, our finances, and our friendships.

The problem with a pleasure seeking lifestyle is that eventually the pleasure fades and you have to have to go to further and further extremes to regain that pleasure that you are seeking.

- It could be fun to get drunk. But then there are the stupid mistakes you make while you are drunk and then the hangover.
- Gambling could be fun for a time, but then the cards turn against you and you suddenly have no money to pay the bills and support the family.
- Drugs and immorality can seem like fun while you are high and while the illicit affair is happening. But then you have to go through the withdrawals, the destruction of your body, the broken relationships, and the unexpected pregnancies.

So if self pleasure is the purpose of life, why is it in the end that it is so illusive, so unfulfilling, and so unsatisfying? Surely there is a better reason for why we are here.

Another common philosophy on life is that if you...

- Live a good, clean, moral life.
- Work hard.
- Take care of the family.
- Be the best husband or wife that you can be.

Then all will be well and you will be OK.

This generally proves to be a more satisfying lifestyle. And there is a good reason why. These are good traits that are of God. Unfortunately, this lifestyle, by itself, will also lead to disappointment.

Deep down in our guts, we all KNOW that there is a reason why we are here. For most of us, we WANT to do what is expected of us so we will not be disappointed when we die.

I found an article on the internet about an Atheist named Justin Brooke who spent five years studying world religions and became a baptized Christian evangelist. I am going to read to you the first part of his article and explain the process he went through to become a believer.

"Dear Friends,

I'm writing you today because my life has been deeply changed.

I've been studying hours and hours of material about the major world religions. Finally, an ancient teacher won me over. My goal is not to convert you to my point of view. Only to tell you my story and leave you thinking about a few big ideas. I just want to put a stone in your shoe in a good way.

But first, I should explain how I got to this point. I remember in 2015 crossing the magical million dollar line in my business and feeling depressed. It felt like it did not matter. In fact it sapped all my drive.

Ever since middle school my purpose was to satisfy what society said I needed to have. I even wrote an article in middle school about how I would have a house with 52 bedrooms, one for each week.

There was nothing inside myself giving me a reason to drive on. I remember even thinking what is the purpose of waking up?

To do what?

The same thing as yesterday?

To buy another thing — and get an even bigger house — to hold more things? I had already had a 6 bedroom house, did I need a 7th bedroom? I thought I had won the game. I had “all the things.” However, I was craving something that mattered more than the money and things. I was desperate to feel spiritual fulfillment."

There are promises in the Bible that if you seek God with all of your heart, you WILL find Him. If you are an unbeliever this morning this will not be of much comfort to you yet. But if you are willing to take the promise to heart and seek God, the scriptures promise that you will FIND Him.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Acts 17:22-31 (NASB)

²² So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all respects. ²³ For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything that is in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made by hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; ²⁶ and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷ **that they would SEEK God, if perhaps they might feel around for Him and FIND HIM**, though He

is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His descendants.' ²⁹ Therefore, since we are the descendants of God, we ought not to think that the Divine *Nature* is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by human skill and thought. ³⁰ So having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now proclaiming to mankind that all people everywhere are to repent, ³¹ because He has set a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all people by raising Him from the dead."

Prayer

Let's continue with Justin's story.

BODY:

I. Knowing There is a God.

Justin reached a point in his life where he realized that there had to be more so he decided to study all of the major religions of the world and seek for the truth. He had been told stories from the Bible at an early age but later in life he felt that God, Heaven, Jesus walking on water, and Noah's Ark all sounded like fairy tales. This was the first time he started saying, out loud, that he did not believe in an imaginary all powerful man in the clouds. So he began trying to get others to believe that God could not exist based on science. Science made so much more sense because you could see it and it was real.

I will be preaching, Lord willing on the major religions of the world and how they compare to Christianity later. I will only touch on Scientology and Atheism this morning.

So when Justin heard of Scientology, it seemed to be the perfect fit. He sought out someone who was an actual Scientologist and started asking questions. But after studying it for some time he discovered that it basically taught how to be a better communicator, how to improve relationships, how to structure a business, and elaborate protocols for handling tough life scenarios.

The straw that broke the camel's back for him, was this vibe of secrecy from those he spoke with. Why would our purpose in life be wrapped in secrecy for only a few people to know? He did not want to live his life in secrecy.

Justin considered that for most of his life, he was a proclaimed atheist. While atheism is not a considered as a religion it is a rapidly growing worldview. Atheists do not believe in the existence of a god or gods. They believe that the very start of the universe, space, and time was just a random occurrence. It is known as the Big Bang Theory.

Atheists fall into one of two categories...

- God doesn't exist but they believe in good versus evil.
- Anyone who believes in god is a moron.

Justin believed in good versus evil.

Justin, like most Atheists, claimed science as the ultimate answer. The problem with science being the answer is **first**, science has been wrong throughout history and **second**, because science cannot answer spiritual questions. A quick Google search can show you

many things that science has gotten wrong over time. Such as a flat earth and how the earth was the center of the universe. These were beliefs that science was once certain about but through time was proven wrong. That is because science can only look backwards, not forwards. New data is always coming out and proving old answers wrong. So it became obvious that science was not the answer. It was ever changing.

The scriptures tell us that is through creation that we can know that there is a God. **That is where your faith must begin.**

Romans 1:20-25 (NASB)

²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse.* ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

II. Believing the Scriptures are True.

You see, Atheists are actually studying Gods creation and gradually understanding how the universe was created and calling it science. If we look carefully at creation, the scripture says, we will know that there had to be a Creator. The perfection of everything around us such as the air we breathe, the exact positioning from the sun for life to be sustainable, water for us to drink, food for us to eat, and the healing of our bodies, the complexity of the DNA within us: all of this points to a creator. Anyone who refuses to acknowledge a Creator are actually exchanging the truth of God which has been made evident to them through creation for falsehood, and are worshipping and serving creation rather than the Creator.

Justin had studied the major religions and eventually settled in the mountains of Tennessee. His new neighbors invited him to church and he went in order to meet his neighbors and to be polite.

And then it started...

The pastor had this whole sermon about being full of yourself instead of God, leading to feeling unsatisfied.

Looking back he felt as though he was called to Church this specific day. The message that day nailed him like a lightning bolt between the eyes, but he laughed it off. He chalked it up to hearing what he wanted to hear because he was already searching for something.

He reminded himself that he was an Atheist. Out of fear of being wrong his whole life, he started researching with a new goal. This time to prove Christianity was wrong. There was no way he was going to admit he had been wrong all this time, and even worse that he had been selfish and full of himself. I want to remind you that he was not the first person in history to try to prove Christianity wrong.

This is a quote from Justin...

"The harder I tried to prove Christianity wrong, the more evidence I found for believing in the resurrection of Christ.

Did you know there was 500 eye witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus?

That within a few decades of his life Jesus is mentioned by both Jewish and Roman historians corroborating many parts of the New Testament.

That there is more evidence for the life of Jesus Christ than there is of Julius Cesar, and no one refutes Julius.

Yet, it was while I was watching a NETFLIX movie called "The Case For Christ" that I heard a line that finally confirmed my belief."

He said "*When will enough evidence, be enough evidence?*"

After that, I knew that Christianity was what I was seeking all along.

This is the second step for your faith. We must come to believe that the Scriptures are true.

III. Obey God's Word.

There are people all around us who are searching for a meaning in life. They are aware that what they are doing is futile and that their lives are meaningless. They have that gut feeling that there is a purpose and somehow they have missed it. And their gut feeling is correct. They just do not know what it is.

The third step for your faith is to surrender yourself to Christ.

Here is the Bad News.

Ever since the fall of man when Adam and Eve ate of the tree of good and evil and sin entered in the lives of mankind, we have all sinned.

Romans 3:23 (NASB)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Once we reach the age of accountability and realize that we have sinned, there is nothing that we can do on our own to make ourselves sinless before God. That sin has separated us from God. That is why living a moral life and trying to be the best person we can be is not enough. Despite all of our "good" deeds, we are still in sin before God.

Romans 6:23a (NASB)

²³ For the wages of sin is death...

We are made up of a temporal body and an eternal soul and spirit. When we physically die apart from Christ, we will live eternally apart from God (*the wages of sin is death*) a spiritual death apart from God.

But, there is Good News!

Romans 6:23b (NASB)

...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That free gift is given to anyone who believes that Jesus truly was the Son of God and realizes that they are a sinner and asks God to forgive them.

John 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

Christ did, in fact, die on the cross to restore your relationship to God. In other words, he died as a sacrifice on the cross for you so that your sins could be forgiven and you could be found faultless before God.

He died to do what you could not do. That is to be found blameless without sin before God.

He died to make us His adopted children, to make us His own.

He died to transfer you from a worldly kingdom at war with Him to His spiritual Kingdom.

That is the true purpose of life. To accept Christ into your life and let Him make you righteous before God and **serve** Him so that when you die, you can spend eternity with Him.

CONCLUSION:

When you accept Christ as your savior, you will find meaning and purpose in your life and you will find hope, satisfaction, and fulfillment that cannot be found apart from Him.

If you do not know Christ as your Lord and Savior, I invite you to come forward this morning and place your faith in Christ. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life.

You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!

He Is Lord!