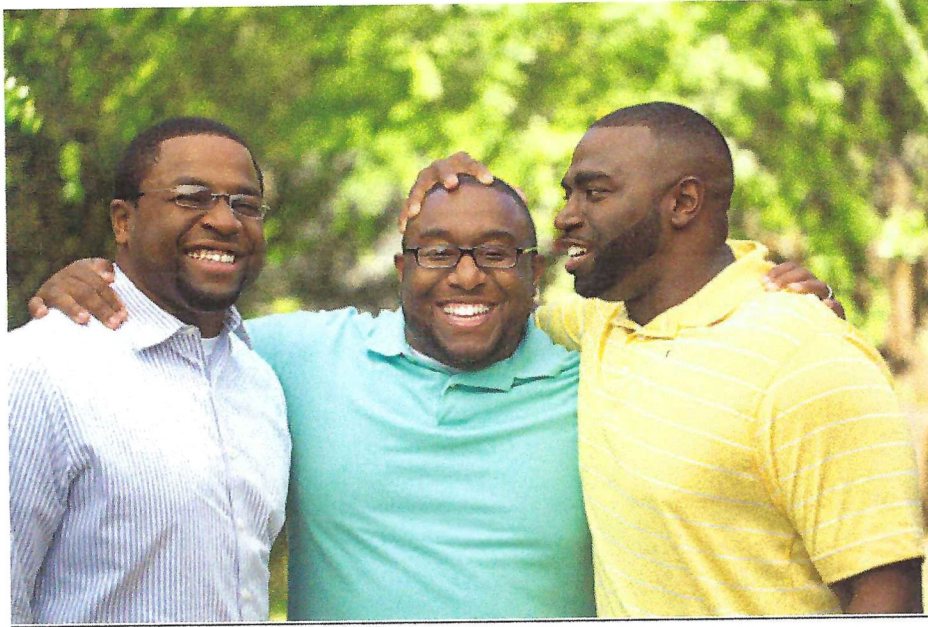


WEEK 2

“SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PURPOSE”

“God’s Purpose is the Key To Our Fulfillment”



AGAPE LOVE WPF FAMILY MINISTRIES

Zoom – MENS Bible Study Series – Thursday’s at 7:00 p.m.

Pastor Rudolph & Lady Zee Maybell

“UNDERSTANDING the PURPOSE and POWER OF MEN”

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PURPOSE

GOD'S PURPOSE IS THE KEY TO OUR FULFILLMENT.

God desires that every man find his purpose and fulfill it. If a man wants to know who he is in order to live fully in that reality, he must first understand God's principles of purpose. He has to learn these anchors for living from the Word of God. Otherwise, he will fall into a trap of confusion—where many of us are right now.

Proverbs 19:21 is a foundational Scripture in regard to understanding God's purpose: "*Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.*" This crucial truth tells us that we can make all the plans we want to in life, but if we don't make our plans according to the purposes for which God created us, then our plans will be in vain. We won't live up to our full potential, and we will be unfulfilled. We may even pursue goals and engage in practices that are harmful for us. We have only one life, and we have to make that life count if we are ever to fulfill our purpose.

HOW ARE YOU USING YOUR LIFE?

What value do you place on your life? Do you know that one of the most dangerous things in life is wasting time? It is said that time is a commodity that you never are able to recapture. Once you've lost time, it's gone forever. What you've lived, you can never relive. So the best thing to do with time is to use it in a way that will bring the greatest results. The best way—the only way—to use time effectively is to do *what* you are supposed to do *when* you are supposed to do it. Effectiveness does not mean just doing good things, but rather doing the right thing.

GOOD VERSUS BEST

It would be terrible to be busy doing the wrong things your entire life. Wouldn't it be sad to be serious and committed and faithful—to the wrong

thing? It's possible to do what is good but not what is right. What I mean is this: it is possible to do good things but not the things that are best based on God's purposes for you. One of the devil's greatest weapons against my life is to get me busy doing things that are good but that are not right and best for me.

EFFECTIVENESS MEANS DOING WHAT YOU WERE MEANT TO DO.

God created each of us with a purpose. That purpose is what's right for us. Suppose Jesus had become a priest in the Sanhedrin, the highest council and tribunal of the Jews. That would have been a good thing. Suppose He had become a member of the Sadducees and been one of the leaders in the social structure of Galilee and Judea. That would have been a good thing. Suppose He had become a social worker, helping the poor, having massive crusades, feeding multitudes of people every day with bread and fish. Would that have been a good thing? Sure. Suppose He had devoted every hour to healing the sick and raising the dead. That would have been a good thing, wouldn't it? Yet it would not have been the right thing for Him.

There was a time when Jesus began to tell His disciples that He would be crucified. They didn't want to hear that. *"Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you.'"* (Matt. 16:22). The disciples' reaction to Jesus' purpose was, "We rebuke You. Get that thought out of Your mind. You will not die." But Jesus turned around and rebuked them for their shortsighted perspective. *"Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men'"* (v. 23). Jesus was saying, in effect, "I know why I was born. I know the purpose for My life. Don't distract Me with things that are merely good. I must pursue the highest purpose."

One of the reasons Jesus knew His purpose was that He was continually seeking God and in constant communication with Him. That is the pattern each of us needs to follow. Why? It's dangerous to live without God. If you don't know God, you'll never know your reason for existence. And if you don't know why you were born, you could live a completely wrong life. I didn't say a bad life. There are many good people who are

pursuing relationships, careers, and goals in life that are not best for them. What we have to concern ourselves with is living effectively. The only way to live a fulfilled life is to know why you were born.

FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE

Have you ever had a new car break down on you right in the middle of traffic? You got out and kicked one of the tires. You just wanted to curse at it because the car wasn't fulfilling its purpose. It was brand-new. It looked sleek. It had a nice paint job. But you couldn't drive it. What made you angry at the car? It's simple: the car's purpose was to transport you, to make you mobile; but the car was not taking you anywhere. No matter how great the car looked, it wasn't right; it wasn't fulfilling its purpose.

KNOWING AND FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE IS THE ONLY WAY TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.

Many men are like that car. They're stopped in the middle of traffic, and they don't even realize it. They're spending their lives doing things that look good, but they don't know God—or they know much too little about Him and His ways.

We have to realize that good deeds are not a substitute for rightness. Knowing and fulfilling your purpose is the only way to do what is right. Remember our foundational verse: *"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails"* (Prov. 19:21). One of the reasons why this verse is so important is that many people are planning to use charitable work as their ticket into heaven. It's very dangerous to attempt to bribe God. God is not impressed with all the good things we do. He's waiting for us to do what He's asked us to do in the first place.

Discovering our purpose enables us to stop wasting our lives and start fulfilling our potential. However, then we must be careful not to become sidetracked along the way. The greatest way to destroy someone is to distract the person from his or her true purpose. Sometimes people will do this unintentionally, as we saw from the example of Peter and Jesus. However, whether people try to distract us out of the best or worst of intentions, we must learn to remain steadfast in the purpose for which we were created.

REMAINING CONSTANT IN YOUR PURPOSE

Nehemiah fulfilled an important purpose in life, but he might have been persuaded to be sidetracked. He was in exile serving as cupbearer to the king of Persia when he heard that the city of Jerusalem was still in a broken-down condition. He was distressed over this news and determined, "I've got to repair the city." So he prayed, and then he obtained permission from the king to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. God's favor was on his plans because this was the purpose for which he was created. He went and started to rebuild the wall with the help of the remnant of Jews in Jerusalem.

However, some men from the surrounding area didn't like what Nehemiah was doing, and they tried to stop him. They ridiculed and slandered him, but he kept on with the work. They conspired to kill him, but he armed some of the workers with weapons and thwarted the plot. They tried to fill him with fear and make him flee for his life. One of the last things they tried is usually the most effective means of sidetracking people. They said, "Come, let's have a meeting; let's discuss what you're doing. Maybe we can help you." (See Nehemiah 1-6.)

Again, the best way to prevent a man from accomplishing something is to get him to do a good thing—like have a meeting—instead of what he should be doing. Yet Nehemiah wasn't fooled. He told them, "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?" (Neh. 6:3).

REINFORCE YOUR PURPOSE

I can't emphasize strongly enough that knowing your purpose is crucial for your life's course. Every young person comes to a time when he or she leaves childhood and enters adulthood. That period is called adolescence. This is the time in which young people are trying to discover who they are and why they are. This is also often the time when we lose them or gain them—lose them to a destructive lifestyle and a wasted life or gain them for a positive, fulfilling future. Purpose, therefore, is key to a young person's effectiveness and happiness in life.

JESUS' PURPOSE WAS REINFORCED FROM HIS BIRTH.

Did Jesus have an adolescent problem? The answer is, very simply, no. Why? His purpose was reinforced from birth. His earthly mother and father were told why He was born. Somehow I believe that God would love for all parents to know Him so well that they would have an idea of the life purpose of their children.

The angel of the Lord said to Joseph, "You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Joseph shared this message with Mary. When Jesus was born, Mary could talk to Him about His purpose. Even though, at the time, she didn't fully understand the implications of His name, she could tell Him, "You're going to be a Savior."

The Hebrew meaning of the name *Jesus* is "Jehovah-saved," or "the Lord is salvation." In essence, Jesus' name means "Savior." When He was a boy, His friends would say to Him, "Savior, come out and play with us." His parents would say to Him, "Savior, come in for supper." When people heard Him coming, they'd say, "Is that You, Jesus? How are you doing today, Savior?" All His life, He heard that name. Yet it was not just a name; it was a reason for being, and He grew up with that purpose in His mind.

When Jesus was twelve years old, He went to Jerusalem with His parents to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. When the Feast was over, His parents started for home, thinking that Jesus was among the large group of relatives and friends traveling with them. When they didn't find Him, they went back to Jerusalem and finally found Him in the temple courts. They said, "Why did You leave us, Son? Why did you do this to us?" (See Luke 2:48.) His answer was very powerful. At twelve years of age, He was able to say to His parents, "I must be about My Father's business" (v. 49 NKJV).

How old are you?

Are you still questioning what you are about?

Are you still wondering what kind of business your Father is in and which part you are to play in the company?

Are you still "changing your major" in life every three years?

Do you find you can't graduate from God's preparatory school into God's work world?

Are you fifty years old and still looking for a job transfer?

I know it's not easy to take a hard look at yourself, but it's necessary if you're going to discover your true purpose in life.

You will be busy doing meaningful work when you learn why you are here. At twelve years of age, Jesus was busy with His purpose. Isn't that an exciting way to live? Don't give up on having a purposeful life, no matter what your age is. Get busy with the right thing.

PRINCIPLES FOR FINDING YOUR PURPOSE

How do you discover what's right? God has given us seven principles of purpose so that we can live successful, fulfilled lives. Write them on a sheet of paper and put them on your mirror so you can look at them every morning when you're getting ready for work. Use them as a bookmark in your Bible to remind yourself of them when you're praying and reading the Word. When you understand these principles, you'll be able to learn and live in your purpose:

1. God is a God of purpose.
2. God created everything with a purpose.
3. Not every purpose is known to us because we have lost our understanding of God's original intent for us.
4. Where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable.
5. To discover the purpose of something, never ask the creation; ask the creator.
6. We find our purpose only in the mind of our Maker.
7. God's purpose is the key to our fulfillment.

1. GOD IS A GOD OF PURPOSE

God is a purposeful Being. He has a purpose for everything He has ever done. He established His purpose before He created what was needed to fulfill it. What He plans is intentional, meaningful, and guaranteed to succeed.

This theme is found throughout the Bible. Consider these Scriptures:

The LORD Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand." (Isa. 14:24)

The plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations. (Ps. 33:11)

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isa. 55:10-11)

Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. (Heb. 6:16-17)

God has purposes that He determines beforehand and then carries out. These include plans for humanity as a whole and plans for males and females who carry out humanity's purposes. To bring this to a personal level, this includes plans for you and me. God does not do anything on a whim or without knowing the end result.

The origins of humanity are described in the book of Genesis, which means "beginning." However, the Creation that we read about in Genesis was not the real beginning. I would like to call Genesis "the end result after God finished His thought processes." When God finished deciding what He wanted to do, then He created. First God predetermined, predestined, or purposed everything. Then He produced it.

**GENESIS IS BOTH THE
BEGINNING AND THE
END RESULT.**

This concept is crucial to our understanding of purpose. It means that Genesis was not the beginning of a supernatural experiment with an unknown outcome. Genesis was the beginning of the production of something that was sure. So, when we talk about what happened in Genesis, we're really talking about what happened after God finished thinking.

Therefore, in Genesis, we are looking at the start-up of the project, as I like to call it. Those of you who are studying project management know

that this is an important step in the process of building. When you reach the start-up phase, it means that you have all the plans drawn, all the physical resources in place, all the management resources in order, and now you're ready to begin. That's Genesis.

Do you begin building a house when you dig the foundation? No, you begin building it when the idea is conceived. This means that the finished house is in the unseen. People pass by the property, and they don't see it. However, to you who understand and know what is going to happen, it is already finished. Digging the foundation is the beginning of the implementation of your purpose. So, after you dig the foundation, when somebody asks you, "What are you doing?" your answer is very definite. You point to the architect's rendering of the house and say, "I am building this."

God revealed this truth to me in a very visual way. There is a street near where I live called Shirley Street. At one time, there was only a parking lot there. One day when I was driving along that street I saw a large sign with a beautifully painted picture of a building. There was no building on the site yet, but there was the big sign and the name of a building. It showed the landscape, the color of the building, the windows, everything. It was a detailed picture of what the completed building would look like. The sign said, "Coming soon."

I drove past the lot and sensed the Holy Spirit saying to me, "Did you see that?" I said, "See what?" He said, "Did you see the finish?" Did I see the finish? I drove by the post office and came back around to take another look at the painting. He said, "There it is. The finish." The construction company was showing us the end of their purpose. To have vision means to see something coming into view as if it were already there. The company had a vision for this building.

Likewise, God in His wisdom is not guessing about His plans for us—for humanity as a whole or for each of us individually. God has already decided on His purpose. He has the complete picture. It's on His drawing board. It's His vision for us. It isn't an afterthought. In Genesis 1, we read how He began to dig the foundation of humanity. We'll pick up on this theme in chapter 4, because it is essential to understanding the nature and purpose of the male.

What we need to understand at this point is that when God created the male and the female, He had already predetermined what they were supposed to be and do. They are not divine experiments. Together, they are an intentional divine project with a predetermined purpose.

2. GOD CREATED EVERYTHING WITH A PURPOSE

God created everything with a purpose in mind, and He also created it with the ability to fulfill its purpose. Everything God has made is the way it is because of why it was created. The *why* dictates its makeup. The purpose of a thing determines its nature, its design, and its features.

You don't make something until you know what you want and why you want it. You'll never find a manufacturer starting a project in a plant, hoping it will turn out to be something useful. Its purpose and design are complete before production starts. For example, if a manufacturer decides he wants to build an apparatus that can both record moving pictures onto a magnetic tape for replay and broadcast them live through the medium of television, then he has created a product, a video camera—but the manufacturer designed it first. What's more, everything in the video camera is necessary for its proper functioning. If you could look inside such a camera, you would see things that you didn't know were there and that you don't know the use for. Yet nothing in that product is there for the fun of it. As a matter of fact, because it is so expensive, there had better be nothing in it just for the fun of it.

**THE PURPOSE OF SOMETHING
DETERMINES ITS NATURE,
DESIGN, AND FEATURES.**

Let me give you another illustration that is even closer to home—your big toe. Are you aware that if your big toe were cut off, you would lose your balance and fall down? You probably never think about your big toe until you stub it. Then it just seems like an annoyance. Yet it keeps you standing up when you lean forward. Your big toe isn't there just for fun. Thank God for big toes! There's also a purpose for your fingernails. Some of you know exactly how important they are because you've had an accident and lost one. Your fingernails are there to protect the softer skin on your fingers.

Since God created everything with a purpose, both males and females need to go to Him if they want to know their true reason for being. If they try to change His plans or fight against them, they are in essence fighting against themselves, because they're working against their own nature, their own makeup, the way they function best based on the Manufacturer's design. Moreover, because God is love, His plans embody what is best for us, so they would also be working against their own highest good.

God's purpose requires two genders working together in cooperation to accomplish a mutual vision. Accordingly, males and females have complementary designs that enable them to fulfill God's purpose together.

3. NOT EVERY PURPOSE IS KNOWN TO US

Although everyone and everything on earth has a purpose, this does not mean that we are aware of their purposes. When human beings as a race turned their backs on God and His ways, as we learn about in Genesis 3, they ended up losing their knowledge of God's intent for themselves and for the world.

Rejecting God was the equivalent of buying a sophisticated and intricate piece of equipment and then throwing away the user's manual. If you get something to work under those circumstances, it is only by pure chance. The more likely scenario is that you will never get it to function properly. You will also miss out on the many features and functions it has to offer. It will never fulfill its complete purpose.

Likewise, humanity has not respected the fact that God's creation and His directions for living were established for a specific reason and that, if that purpose continues to be abandoned, males and females will never function properly as human beings. This is a very dangerous situation for them to be in, because it leads right to the next principle.

4. WHERE PURPOSE IS NOT KNOWN, ABUSE IS INEVITABLE

Whenever purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable. Suppose I'm Henry T. Ford. I'm going to add a motor to a carriage and build a product called a motorcar. I know the purpose before I build this vehicle. It will enable people to be more mobile on land. Now suppose you decide, "I want to use this motorcar as a boat," and you drive it off a cliff and into the water.

What will happen? You're probably going to drown, and the car is going to be ruined. Why? The car was built to fulfill a specific purpose, and if you do not use it according to its purpose, then you will likely be harmed in the process. We need to keep from driving off the cliff of life by understanding and fulfilling our purpose as human beings.

Here is another aspect of this principle: the penalty for drinking poison is death from poisoning. You don't need God to kill you after you have swallowed poison. What this means for us is that God doesn't have to do anything to judge us for abusing our lives. We judge ourselves by receiving the consequences of our participation in harmful practices based on our determination to live according to our own knowledge rather than His. Consequently, we are victims of our own decisions, not of God's judgment.

These examples demonstrate that if you don't know the purpose of something, you will misuse or abuse it in some way. That's why it's possible to be sincerely wrong. It's possible to be faithfully wrong. It's possible to be seriously wrong. You're serious, but you're wrong, because you don't know the purpose for the thing you're involved in. This principle holds true for everything, including people.

**IF YOU'RE SINCERE, YET DON'T
KNOW YOUR PURPOSE, YOU
WILL BE SINCERELY WRONG.**

How many people go into marriage very seriously? Most people do. They go to the church, stand at the altar, and say to their betrothed, "I will love you until I die." They're very serious. But then they "die" in three months. At least their love dies. Then their family and friends try to figure out what happened. Their marriage failed because they didn't understand the purpose of marriage, the purpose of a mate, or the purpose of family. Because they didn't understand these things, they abused their union.

People abuse things because they just don't know their purposes—or because they disregard those purposes. When males and females don't know God's intentions, they end up abusing each other, even if they don't mean to. If males are going to solve their current identity crisis and fulfill their purpose as men, husbands, and fathers, they must rediscover God's plan for them. Otherwise, they will hurt those around them, even if it's unintentional.

5. TO DISCOVER PURPOSE, NEVER ASK THE CREATION; ASK THE CREATOR

If you want to know the purpose of something, don't ask the thing itself. Why? It didn't plan, design, or build itself. Only the manufacturer knows the why and how of his product; no one else truly does. That is why he can claim perfect relationship with his product.

Therefore, if you're going to use something, the first question you need to ask is, "Who made this?" If you buy a certain kind of guitar, you need to consult the manufacturer who made that particular guitar. That is why the company includes an instructional booklet with the instrument; the booklet tells you how to use the guitar based on its purpose. You don't use it to paddle a boat. You don't use it to play baseball. In other words, the manufacturer sent you the manual to protect you from abusing the product and so you could have the full enjoyment of it.

The point is this: *to understand how we function as human beings—as males and females—we need to go to the Manual given to us by the Designer and Manufacturer who created us: the Bible.* God knew exactly what He wanted when He thought of the male. Remember that He created both male and female after He had decided what each should be in order to fulfill His purposes and plans, and that He designed them accordingly.

This means that He is the only One who knows how humanity is intended to function. If you have any questions about why you are here, you should check the Manual. If you don't know the purpose of a thing, all you can do is experiment. Everybody who doesn't know his or her purpose is just experimenting with life.

LIFE IS NOT A TRIAL RUN.

Let me use marriage as an illustration again. Do you know what most marriages are today? Big experiments. "I don't really know what a wife is for, but

I'm old enough to get married, so I'm going to have one." You get married because you're twenty-five. All right, then what? Do you know what you have? "No, but she looks good." What's a wife for? "Hey, man, to have sex with and to clean the kitchen." This is a big experiment. But guess what? After three weeks, you realize she doesn't agree with your definition. The

experiment isn't working. She isn't cleaning those dishes, and she isn't into being a living sacrifice every night. She begins to ask for things like time. She wants love and affection and attention. She wants appreciation. "Hey, I didn't bargain for all that." Well, my friend, marriage is not a trial run.

Again, whenever you don't know the purpose of a thing, you're experimenting. That's what many people—especially young people—are doing with life. They don't know what education is for, so they treat school like an experiment. They skip classes and spend their time partying, then they flunk out. They experiment with sex and sexual identity, and they end up with all kinds of problems. They experiment with drugs and hurt their bodies.

When I was a boy, I was tempted to experiment in order to find out about life. I'm grateful God protected me from much of that. But many of the young people whom I grew up with did not make it through their experimentation. The experiment blew up. Some are dead. The bodies of others are contaminated and wrecked from using destructive substances. They didn't know the purpose of the elements they were using.

I'd like to say to the young people reading this book: if you want to know why you were born, the worst people to ask are your friends, because your friends are trying to figure out why they're here, too. If you want to know your reason for existence, don't ask another product; ask the Manufacturer. Everyone else is guessing.

What we've been doing all these years is asking the product why it exists. Because the world doesn't understand much about the reason for the existence of things, it functions like one big experimental lab. All of us seem to have been assuming the position of scientists. We have imagined that we have the time and intelligence to discover the reason for our existence through experimentation. Then we find out that life is short, and that we're very poor researchers.

Life is too precious to treat like a trial run. The only way to avoid the cost of trial and error is to learn the purpose of your life. Think about a car mechanic. If he's just experimenting, he won't last long in the automotive business. If he says, "I wonder what this part is for? Let me guess what section of the engine I should attach it to," that's experimentation. He doesn't know what the manufacturer had in mind.

Well, if you wouldn't let an inexperienced mechanic work on your car, what about your life? No university professor knows people well enough to write a definitive book about what makes us tick. No psychologist or psychiatrist truly knows me. God wrote a book on His product, and the product is me. Tell yourself, "I'm an expensive product. I won't let anyone experiment with me." It's a dangerous thing for us to experiment with this precious commodity called life.

Therefore, if a man wants to know his reason for living, He must look to God and His Manual—not to other males. If he looks to himself or others, he will travel an unreliable and hazardous course in life.

6. WE FIND PURPOSE ONLY IN THE MIND OF OUR MAKER

If you remember this principle all your life, you'll be safe: before you buy something, check to see who made it. Right away, you'll know what was in the mind of the maker. If you buy a shirt on sale at a discount store, and you see the store's label in the collar, you'll treat it differently than if you buy a Pierre Cardin shirt. You might toss the discount shirt on a chair, but you'll put the designer shirt on a hanger in your closet.

We need to understand the mind of our Maker. How do we do this? By learning how He thinks. The only way for us to succeed is by discovering and living in the purposes of our Maker, by undergoing a transformation in the way we think about ourselves based on His original intentions for us. That transformation comes about by a renewal of our minds:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom. 12:1-2)

God's ways will transform your spirit, your mind, and your outlook. When you present yourself to God and learn from Him, you will begin to understand His purpose. "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7).

The greatest way for you to find purpose is to yield your life to the Manufacturer. You shouldn't come to God because it's the religious thing to do. You shouldn't come to God because "everybody" is doing it. You shouldn't come to God because it's good to be a part of the church. You should come to God because you want to find out how not to waste your life. No one knows you like the One who made you. That's the bottom line.

We are so special to God that He sent His only Son to die for us. There must be something unique about each one of us for God to want us to receive salvation so that we can fulfill the purpose for which He gave us life. We need to seek Him earnestly in order to discover that purpose. "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

Thus, the male will fulfill his purpose only if he seeks the mind of his Maker with all his heart. When God's plans unfold before him, his fragmented life will become an orderly whole, and he can become the man he was meant to be.

7. GOD'S PURPOSE IS THE KEY TO OUR FULFILLMENT

You can never be totally and completely satisfied until you find your purpose and then live in it. You cannot do what you're supposed to do until you discover what you are supposed to do. And if you do what you're not supposed to do, you're not going to be fulfilled. You're wasting time. You're abusing your life. Stop it right now.

I was speaking about purpose at a church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A lady came up to me after the service and said, "I'm fifty-six years old, brother. Where were you fifty-six years ago?" I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "You're the first person ever to come into my life and help me understand that I have a reason for living—and I can't give an account of fifty-six years right now. Where were you for fifty-six years?"

Sometimes people begin to feel the way that woman did; they're distressed because they've wasted so much time. If this is your situation, don't be discouraged. One of the wonderful things about God is that He has a way of restoring the years that the locusts have eaten. (See Joel 2:23-26.) When you go to Him, He knows how to make up for the time that you've lost.

Yet God would prefer that we follow Him and know our purpose all our lives. That is why the Word of God says very strongly to young people,

“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth” (Eccl. 12:1). The Bible is saying to us, “Remember God now—not when you’ve finished partying and ruining your health with drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, so that you say, ‘Well, I’m sick now; I’d better go find God.’” Don’t wait until after you have messed up your life to remember God. “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.” Why? God wants you to remember the Manufacturer early so that He can set you on course for your entire life.

GOD KNOWS HOW TO MAKE UP FOR THE TIME YOU HAVE LOST.

God didn’t say, “Remember the university.” He didn’t say, “Remember the school guidance counselor,” or “Remember what your friends are saying.” They can give you only their

opinions about what you should do. God said, “Remember your Creator, the Manufacturer, the One who made you. Remember Him first while you’re young.” Why? So that the evil days won’t rob your life.

Some of you know what I’m talking about because you’ve been there and now regret it. Some of you might still be in the middle of it. Others of you might not be using harmful substances, but you’re still ruining your life. You’re working fourteen hours a day trying to be “successful,” but you’re not doing what you were put on the earth to do. You’re not going to be fulfilled.

Wouldn’t it be great to live every day effectively, doing exactly what you were born to do? There’s no fulfillment without knowing your purpose.

Remember the painting of that building on Shirley Street? After I had driven past the sign the second time, the Holy Spirit said to me, “If you were to see the men working on that project, digging up all the mud and muck, all the rocks and everything, making big holes, and if you were to ask them what they were doing, they would say, ‘We’re moving toward that. We are building that.’ They could tell you exactly where they were headed.” I have never forgotten that lesson.

I have a question for you: is your life similar to that? If someone were to ask you what you’re doing, could you tell them you’re headed somewhere? Could you tell them where? Are you so clear about your dream that you could paint a picture of it?

If you know where you’re going, then when someone doesn’t understand the reason for the mud, the muck, the water, and the hole, it doesn’t

matter. All that might not look right, but you see, that’s the process. The process gets really messy sometimes. When you’re in the midst of the process, your life might not look like it’s becoming anything. But take careful note: there’s a painting of you. God has painted it for you in His Word. Anytime you get bogged down in the mud and the muck, every time you get discouraged, you can look at that painting.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU’RE HEADED?

When a person works in construction, sometimes the contractor will tell him just to dig a trench. He can’t see what this trench has to do with anything, but he has to trust him. He digs the trench because he knows the contractor sees things he doesn’t know about. Likewise, God is in the business of constructing us and our lives. He is the Contractor. Sometimes He will tell you to do something, and He won’t explain much about it.

You may be in the middle of something right now that He’s told you to do, but that you don’t understand; it doesn’t seem to make any sense. You feel like you’re just digging a trench. You’re saying, “This isn’t what I bargained for.” Maybe your job is a trench. Maybe your marriage is a trench. But when you are pursuing God and His purposes, He’s saying, “Don’t quit. You don’t understand. Just stay where you are. We’re building something here. Just dig the trench.”

A man may be able to see the outcome of God’s purposes in his life twenty years into the future or only one day ahead. Yet if he is living in God’s plans for him, he has found the key to his existence.

GOD PUT YOUR PURPOSE WITHIN YOU

Becoming what God has purposed for you not only allows you to live effectively, but also to worship your Creator, who has given you ideas, talents, resources, and energy to fulfill His desires and plans for your life. Proverbs 20:5 says, “*The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.*” That’s a powerful statement, isn’t it? “*The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters.*” That means your purpose is inside you. God has placed it deeply within you. However, in order to draw it out, you need to be assisted by God’s wisdom and revelation—because your purpose was born in the mind of your Maker.

Remember that God created the male with a specific purpose in mind, and He designed him uniquely for that purpose. Therefore, a man possesses inherent characteristics and qualities that are necessary for his functioning and fulfillment as a male. Moreover, when a man identifies, understands, effectively applies, and manifests these qualities in his life and relationships, the female will also experience a fulfillment she has always longed for.

As we've seen, it is beneficial to look at the overall picture before seeing how all the details fit into it. In order for a man to know God's purpose for him as a male and as an individual, he first needs to see God's purposes for humanity as a whole. In the next chapter, we are going to take a close look at God's wisdom and revelation in regard to the creation of man.

PRINCIPLES

1. God is a God of purpose.
2. What God plans is intentional, meaningful, and guaranteed to succeed.
3. God created everything with a purpose.
4. The purpose of something determines its nature, design, and features.
5. Not every purpose is known to us because we have lost our understanding of God's original intent for us.
6. Where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable.
7. To discover the purpose of something, never ask the creation; ask the creator.
8. If we don't know the purpose for our lives, we're just experimenting.
9. When you go to God, He knows how to make up for the time that you lost from not knowing your purpose.
10. We find our purpose only in the mind of our Maker.
11. God's purpose is the key to our fulfillment.
12. God put your purpose within you. To draw it out, you need to be assisted by His wisdom and revelation.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

1. What are you doing to make your life count—for yourself, your family, and God’s eternal purposes?

EXPLORING GOD’S PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES

2. One of the most dangerous things in life is. (p. 39) *Wasting your time.*
3. What is the best way to use time effectively? (p. 39) *Do what you are supposed to do when you are supposed to do it.*
4. What is one of the reasons Jesus knew His purpose? (p.40) *He was continually seeking God and in constant communication with Him.*
5. How does living without God affect your understanding of your reason for existence? *If you don’t know God, you’ll never know your reason for existence, and if you don’t know why you were born, you could live a completely wrong life. (p. 40)*
6. What can cause a person’s potential to be destroyed? (p. 41) *By distracting the person from his or her true purpose.*
7. What did Nehemiah say when people tried to distract him from his true purpose? (p.42) *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?*
8. Why didn’t Jesus have an “adolescent problem? (p.43) *Because His purpose was reinforced from birth. His earthly Mother and Father were told why He was born.*
9. What has God given us so that we can live successful, fulfilled lives? (p.44) *He has given us Seven Principles of Purpose so that we can live successful, fulfilled lives.*
10. What is the first principle of purpose? (p. 44) *That God is a God of Purpose.*
11. What God plans is *Intentional, Meaningful and Guaranteed* to Succeed . (p. 47)
12. When God created the male and the female, He had already *Predetermined* what they were supposed to be and do. (p. 47)
13. What is the second principle of purpose? (p. 47) *That God Created Everything with a Purpose.*
14. Because God purposefully made men and women, they need to go to Him to find their true reason for being. What happens when we try to change or fight against God’s plan for us? (pp. 47-48) *They are fighting against themselves, because they’re working against their own nature, their own makeup, the way they function best is based on the Manufacturer’s design.*
15. Complete the third principle of purpose: Not every purpose is *KNOWN TO US*. (p. 48)
16. When did human beings lose their knowledge of God’s intent for them and the world? (p. 48) *When Human Beings as a Race, turned their backs on God and His Ways!*
17. The fourth principle of purpose reads, “Where purpose is not known-“ (choose one) (p. 48)
(a) ‘We are not responsible for our actions.’ Or (b) *“Abuse is inevitable”*
(b) “Ignorance is bliss” Or (c) “It can’t hurt us.”

18. When we abuse our lives, what judges us, and why? (p. 49) *We judge ourselves by receiving the consequences of our participation in harmful practices, based on our determination to live according to our own knowledge rather than His.*
19. For what two reasons do people abuse things? (p. 49) *If you don't know its purpose you will abuse or misuse it in some way.*
20. What is the fifth principle of purpose? (p 50) *To Discover Purpose, Never Ask The Creation: Ask the Creator!*
21. When you want to know the purpose of something, why shouldn't you ask the thing itself? (p. 50) *Because it didn't Plan, Design, or Build itself.*
22. To understand how we function as human beings, what should we consult? (p. 50) *THE BIBLE, We need to go to the Manual given to us by the Designer and Manufacturer who created us.*
23. What is the sixth principle of purpose? (p. 52) *We will Find Purpose Only In The Mind of Our Maker.*
24. What is the only way we will succeed in life? (P. 52) *Is by discovering and living in the purposes of our Maker, by undergoing a transformation in the way we think about ourselves based on His original intentions for us. This transformation comes about by a renewal of our minds:*

CONCLUSION:

Proverbs 19:21 is a foundational Scripture in regard to understanding God's purpose: "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." If a man want to know who he is so he can live fully in that reality, he must first understand God's principles of purpose. Otherwise, he will fall into confusion-where many men are right now. He may never know the true reason for his existence and may live a life that is completely wrong for him. Knowing and living in God's purposes, however, frees a man to be and do what he was born to be and do-thus bringing him fulfillment and satisfaction in all areas of his life.

APPLYING GOD'S PRINCIPLES TO YOUR LIFE:

THINKING IT OVER

- In what ways have you been living a purposeful life up to now? Or have you been trying to figure out who you are and what you are about? If someone were to ask you where you are headed in life, would you be able to "paint a picture" of it for them? What would it look like?
- How has your understanding of your life's purpose changed through reading the principles outlined in this chapter?
- Jesus knew His purpose because He was continually seeking God and in constant communication with Him. Are you in close communication with God, or is your communication with Him faint right now? What steps can you take to clarify your understanding of God's purpose for you?

PRAYING ABOUT IT

- Make a commitment to spend fifteen minutes every morning seeking God through prayer and asking Him to fulfill His purposes in your life.
- If you have in some way abused people or things because you did not understand God's purposes for them, ask God to forgive you and to renew your understanding of them according to His ways.

ACTING ON GOD'S TRUTH

- No matter how you may have abused your life in the past, don't give up on having a purposeful life. Put the past behind you and decide today to start learning and living in God's purposes for you.
- If God has directed you to do something that you don't fully understand, or if you are experiencing a situation in life that doesn't seem to make sense and you feel as if you're just "digging a trench," don't panic! Continue to be faithful to God and His ways, and allow Him to show you how your trench work fits into the larger picture of His purposes for you.
- Commit to memory these verses that emphasize that God is a God of purpose and that His purposes stand forever: **(Isaiah 14:24; Psalm 33:11; Isaiah 55:10-11.)**