

“Living With Purpose Part 1”
By Parrish Lee
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Matthew 16:21-27 ...Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee...

Here the Lord is talking to His disciples. The conversation was about what our Lord would have to suffer to be glorified and to bring salvation to all. We go on to see Peter withstand our Lord, or, according to Scripture, rebuke the Lord.

Matthew 16:22 Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him...

In other words, **NO**. Now, however well intentioned, whatever the explanation, however spiritual or even justified Peter might have thought himself to be, the fact of the matter was that his ways and his desires did not line up with the Lord Jesus’.

I profess to you today that Peter is not the only person who has found himself in this predicament. We are living in a day and age where acknowledging the Lord is suspect, but following the Lord is unpopular; it’s downright foolish.

Sidebar: I recently saw in Parade magazine an article about the new young atheists. They had pictures of them smiling, preppy-looking, intelligent, and publicized by the media. Saints, we need to pray for our young people. Satan knows that if he can get them while they’re young, he can change their lives.

There are many things that people can do that are noble, edifying, and structurally sound. Things that are approved by society, appreciated by folks all around, things that will be remembered for years, and some things that people write books about. We all know who discovered electricity, who invented the light bulb, who was our first president, people that we consider heroes: World War I, World War II; heroes in sports, people who write songs that we just can’t get enough of. There are the people who invented penicillin or the vaccine for polio or smallpox, people who save lives. If that’s all you have then the reward you get is that of breaking records, saving lives, or starting a nation, and that’s great for this life. You might make the history books, or even get a statue over your tombstone.

Please don’t get me wrong, saints, the Bible says that all good and perfect gifts come from God (James 1:17), so, if a person isn’t faithful with the talents that God has put in their lives, then God will hold them accountable for that. After all, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin (James 4:17). But, if we allow our purpose to be solely about things of this life then that’s all the reward we get.

Matthew 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?...

If we have a worldly mentality, the answer to the question Jesus asked is simple: We gain the world. If we have a Godly mentality, the answer is also simple: We profit nothing.

Part 2 has to do with who influences us.

2 Chronicles 24:1-2 ...Joash did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

Here the Bible gives us an example of a king who started off young and did god in all the days that the priest was around. We find this throughout society: people who do a good job as long as the boss is around. Some Christians are the same way: live like a Christian in church or in Bible Study, or around anybody that might know that they profess Christianity; but don't ask them about when they get away from all that. Don't check them out when they're alone, or around worldly friends. If we do, then we can discover their true purpose, what they really might be going after.

Several years ago, we had a brother in this church who got hit like a bolt of lightning by this woman. She didn't come to church, well, she did come to church a few times, to dig him out. How do I know this? because I work with her now. To her it's a big joke. I told her she wasn't going to Heaven, and some people said, "What do you mean, she's not going to heaven? When she's about to die, all she has to do is say, 'God, I believe!' and He'll forgive her." I told them, "The god that you're describing is a fool, and God ain't no fool!" Anyway, about that brother, no matter how much we talked to him, he just had to have that woman, and she was already married!

There was this homeless man on the campus of a Christian University on a day when a famous evangelist was going to speak. No one had time for that beggar, and some were offended that, of all days, he chose this day to be on their campus. Except for two students who stopped to see what they could do to help, even though they knew that meant that they would be late to hear the speaker. Well, there were three people late that day, and imagine their surprise when the master of ceremonies introduced the speaker, and, there in the rags of the homeless man stood before them, the evangelist, who went on to thank the two students who had helped him, and went on with his sermon on sharing the love of God.

On the news Friday, there was this account of a cell phone clerk who, after having a gun stuck in her face, said to the robber, "Let me tell you about the Jesus that I know."

Part 3 of this message is how we are warred against.

Genesis 3:1-5 Now the serpent was more subtil...

Eve had a purpose in her life: to do what God told her to do. Clearly, at the beginning of this conversation, she understood that purpose. The serpent, however, in the course of this conversation, changed that purpose.

A little while ago I got into a conversation with a young lady and, as I was inviting her out to church, she began telling me about her faith and how she believes in the Lord. In the same sentence in which she confessed her faith was her defense of drinking and dancing in moderation.

Philippians 4:5 Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

Moderation means appropriate, that is, (by implication) mild: gentle, moderation, patient. It doesn't mean to let all men know that you sin a little...

There is a brother that called me up to talk about the minimum ministry requirements that Brother Kenneth allowed me to set up for our fellowship. He said, "Brother Parrish, when you asked us to do this, I thought, how childish, and kindergarten-stuff this request was. We are warriors: Give us something to challenge us. And then," he went on to say, "a week went by and I found myself busy with so many things. When I looked back to check myself I found that I had prayed, but not for five minutes for our leadership, and I found that I didn't complete my two chapters of Bible reading, and I called several brothers, but I can't say it was all about lifting up God."

Matthew 12:27-34 ...Which is the first commandment of all?...

If you are living with purpose correctly, then your purpose will line up with God's purpose. If you love God, and put Him first, then everything else falls into place.