

# A People Of Purpose

Preached From 1 Peter 2:9-12 By Aaron Youngren At Harambee Church  
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## Introduction

The sum of the entire Bible and the entire gospel is God's glory in Christ. As the church, we are the everyday, practical-yet-incredible demonstration of that good news to the world. As such, our lives and every waking moment are part of a larger purpose; because we are God's people, and God's people have purpose.

As God's people, we act and react differently in our everyday circumstances

- The people of God are called to live with an every-day awareness of their purpose.
- The people of God are called to develop different practical relationships, communities, and networks.
- The people of God are called to a different understanding of problems in the world and how to solve them.
- The people of God are called to speak differently to others, because:
- The mindset of the people of God is fundamentally altered.

While this may seem obvious from scripture, current statistical data doesn't support that the practice of these things in the western evangelical church is normative. Recent studies by a subsidiary of the Barna Group (see Kinnaman and Lyons, *UnChristian: What A New Generation Thinks About Christianity*) indicate:

- Two out of five young non-Christians say that Christianity represents a negative image with which they would not like to be associated.
- 17% of young non-Christians claim that they have had "very bad" direct experiences with Christianity.
- 87% of non-Christians between the ages of 16 and 29 say that many Christians are judgmental.
- 70% of non-Christians between the ages of 16 and 29 say that many Christians are insensitive to others.
- 85% of non-Christians between the ages of 16 and 29 say that many Christians are hypocritical.

How far from the words of Julian the apostate, the pagan antagonist of early Christianity, who in letters bemoaning and explaining the abandonment of paganism, advocates adoption of Christian charitable practices such as, "benevolence toward strangers and care for the graves of the dead", and "[support of] not only their poor, but ours as well, everyone can see that our people lack aid from us" (see Paul Johnson, *A History Of Christianity*).

## Purpose

The people of God are called to live with an everyday awareness of their purpose.

Although we dwell in a culture that is saturated with secular materialist exclusion of purpose or ontology (why am I here?), we must believe the Bible when it tells us that we have a purpose as the people of God:

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

1 Peter 2:9

As the church, we are free to escape the drudgery of slavery to sin (a purpose other than God's), and free to pursue a creative, bold and unexpected life of purpose in His kingdom; and we don't have to guess at what that purpose is. God Himself has defined our purpose as bringing Him glory (Matt 28:19; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Eph 1:22-23; 3:20-21; Gen 12:2).

### **Mission Fully Realized**

We must not be tempted to under-realize our mission as the church by only being obedient to certain aspects of our calling. For instance, when we hear the word "mission", we might be tempted to think only of:

- Evangelism
- Disciple Making
- Social Justice
- Relational Reconciliation
- Provision for the Needs Of The Church
- Growth Of The Church Body

Jesus tells us in Rev 21:5 that He is coming to make *all* things new. As such, our witness and gospel must be holistic in nature. We will now expand on a few of these aspects in which we have room to grow both in our imagination of what we should be and how that is worked out practically in our daily lives.

## **Study Guide**

### **Practical Purpose #1: The Household**

The people of God are called to develop different practical relationships, communities, and networks. As we point to God as the ultimate good, the basis for our relationships changes. We begin to obey His commands, and in doing so imitate Christ by serving and providing for His body and working hard to contribute to the financial needs of His body.

#### *Verses For Further Study*

- Each member of each household works hard in his or her role.
  - 1 Thess 4:9-12
  - 2 Thess 3:6-18
  - 1 Tim 5:3-8
- Wherever certain members of the household are suffering or in need, the household takes care of them.
  - 2 Cor 8:1-15
  - 1 Tim 5:3-8
- Everyday sharing given as a command to all believers.
  - Romans 12:9-13, 16-21
  - 1 Thess 4:9-12
  - 1 Tim 6:17-19
  - James 3:14-17
- Good works overflow to people outside of the household.
  - Romans 12:20-21
  - Heb 13:1-3, 16
  - James 1:27

#### *Missionary Meditations*

- What are needs in my community of believers that I can help meet?

- What are my own needs that I need to let others meet?
- How does my hard work make me an image bearer of God?

### **Practical Purpose #2: Justice & Service**

The people of God are called to a different understanding of problems in the world and how to solve them. We are free from the false hope that mankind will provide final justice, but also free to pursue Justice and serve the poor wherever possible.

#### *Verses for Further Study:*

- Gen 12:2
- Luke 6:28
- Matt 5:44-46
- Matt 22:37-39
- Rom 12:14, 20
- Eph 2:8-10
- James 1:27

#### *Missionary Meditations:*

- Which of my neighbors are most in need?
- How has God given me things that I don't deserve?
- Write down names of people that God may be calling you to help.

### **Practical Purpose #3: Truth-Speaking**

The people of God are called to speak differently to others. The Bible tells us that those who do not hope in Christ cannot tell the truth and unleash destruction with the things that they say. As God's people, we are free to be silent, to speak healing, to speak comfort, and to speak the ultimate truth of God's grace in all of our relationships.

#### *Verses For Further Study*

- By verbal testimony to the truth of the gospel to non-believers
  - Matt 28:19
  - Acts 4:20, 29-31
  - Eph 4:11
- Preaching
  - Mark 3:14
  - Acts 16:10
  - Rom 10:14-15
  - 2 Tim 4:2
- Discipling
  - Matt 28:19
- Speaking Reconciliation
  - 2 Cor 5:18-19
  - Ephesians 2:14
- Singing
  - Colossians 3:16

#### *Missionary Meditations*

- What are the lies that prevail in my workplace and neighborhood?
- How can I speak truth into these situations?
- How would I articulate the gospel to my neighbors?
- What would be good news to them?

**The Mindset Of God's People Is Fundamentally Altered**

Finally, it is the power of God's glory demonstrated to us in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross which alone changes our hearts and enables us to operate as royal members of his family, noble carriers of His good news to a broken world.