

A World of Meaning and Purpose | Genesis 1:3-25 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To discuss what it means for our lives that God is a God who gives all of creation purpose and meaning.

Sermon Refresher: We can sometimes come to the book of Genesis asking questions that it is not meant to answer. Instead of answering the **how** question, Genesis 1 speaks more to the **who** and **why** questions of life. Reading Genesis chapter 1 through “who and why lenses” will help us understand that the story of creation is singularly focused on God as the One who creates and the One who gives purpose and meaning to that creation and to our lives as well. And it is through the careful study and experience of his creation that we can grow in our understanding and experience of who God is.

Icebreaker: If someone asked you, “What is your life’s purpose?” what would you say? What would you have said 10 years ago? If your answer is different from how you would have answered 10 years ago, explain why that is.

Transition: As humans we long to understand what our purpose in life is and to find meaning in the things we do. That longing is a result of God creating us, just like the rest of his creation, to have and fulfill a purpose. But sometimes, that quest for meaning and purpose heads in the wrong direction because we start with ourselves. We ask, “What do I want to do, What are my goals?” Genesis 1 tells us that our quest for meaning and purpose can only be found in God because He is the starting point and the One who creates, gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Discussion:

1. Read Genesis 1:2-8. As you read, focus on what you think the author, Moses, is trying to tell us about God. List off as many things that you notice the verses tell us about God.

Genesis 1:2–8

[2] The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

[3] And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. [4] And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. [5] God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

[6] And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." [7] And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. [8] And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. (ESV)

2. Read Psalm 19:1-6.

Psalm 19:1–6

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

[1] The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

[2] Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.

[3] There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.

[4] Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun,

[5] which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

[6] Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (ESV)

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Share of a time when experienced creation declaring the Glory of God?
Where were you? What did you feel? What did you learn about God and how did it deepen your relationship with Him?

3. As we think about creation declaring God's glory, what do you think it looks like for us as humans to declare God's glory in our everyday lives?
4. Keith pointed out in his sermon that Genesis 1 is really about God. He is mentioned 32 times in 35 verses. Though we often wrongly approach Genesis wanting it to serve as a scientific text, instead we find God giving purpose to His creation.

Read the following quote from Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life*:

"It's not about you.... You didn't create yourself, so there is no way you can tell yourself what you were created for! If I handed you an invention you had never seen before, you wouldn't know its purpose, and the invention itself wouldn't be able to tell you either. Only the creator or the owner's manual could reveal its purpose... In the same way, you cannot arrive at your life's purpose by starting with a focus on yourself. You must begin with God, your Creator. You exist only because God wills that you exist. You were made by God and for God- and until you understand that, life will never make sense. It is only in God that we discover our origin, our identity, our meaning, our purpose, our significance, and our destiny."

Share of a time when you sought to make life all about you and/or find your identity or significance in something or someone other than God.

5. Later in *The Purpose Driven Life*, Warren states:

"God prescribed every single detail of your body. He deliberately chose your race, the color of your skin, your hair, and every other feature. He custom-made your body just the way he wanted it. He also determined the natural talents you would possess and the uniqueness of your personality."

Psalms 139:15 says, "You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something (*The Message version*).

THE **crossing** **small groups**

At times we can compare ourselves to others and even be jealous of the strengths and gifts that God has given to them. How does it help us be more secure and embrace our life's purpose when we believe the reality that God designed us (and all of creation) with purposeful intent?

6. Also in *The Purpose Driven Life* we read:

"You were planned for God's pleasure. The moment you were born into the world, God was there as an unseen witness, smiling at your birth. He wanted you alive, and your arrival gave him great pleasure. God did not need to create you, but he chose to create you for his own enjoyment. You exist for his benefit, his glory, his purpose, and his delight. Bringing enjoyment to God, living for his pleasure, is the first purpose of your life. When you fully understand this truth, you will never again have a problem with feeling insignificant. It proves your worth. If you are that important to God, and he considers you valuable enough to keep with him for eternity, what greater significance could you have?"

What would shift or change in your life if you truly believed that God delights in you and that you exist to bring Him glory and joy? What would change in your daily habits?

7. Eric Liddell, an Olympic Gold Medalist and a missionary to China said this, "I was made for a purpose, and that was for China, but God also made me fast. When I run I can feel His pleasure, and to run and win is to honor Him. To not run, would be to hold him in contempt."

When have you experienced God's pleasure while doing something you might not consider overtly "religious"? (examples: running, medicine, teaching, gardening, etc)

Sharing and Prayer: Take a moment and share any prayer requests with the group that relate to living out of who God has created you to be and his purpose for you. Are there insecurities you are living out of? Are there ways you are trying to find your purpose apart from God? Are you struggling to figure out what God might be calling you to do in your life right now? Share anything that comes to mind that is related to these questions.