

The Good Life: Discovering God's Plan for Your Life

"On Purpose and For Purpose"

Part 4 of 4

Matthew 5:14-16

January 27, 2019

Welcome, Series Review and Message Introduction...

We have spent the last three weeks around one basic idea that we would all love to believe is true. Even if you're not a Christian, it would be nice if this were true: that there's a good God with a good plan. The reason we've already spent three weeks and we are concluding with one more is because believing there is a good plan for you is one thing but, discovering God's good plan for you is way easier said than done, mostly because God's good plan for you is unique to you. There's a good God with a *unique* plan. As we've said all along, the most difficult aspect of discovery is found in how uniquely personal God's plan for our life really is. God's plan is custom. It's deeply personal. We could say:

God's plan for each of us is unique to us because each of us is unique to God.

We are all so unique...everybody is different. Just look around...do some people watching. It's amazing. How is it possible for 7 billion people to all have a unique fingerprint? There are people who love salad. There are people who believe salad is for rabbits. There are people who vote democrat. There are people who vote republican. There are people who enjoy wearing a tie. There are people who have a different pair of shoes for each day of the month and there are people who wear the same pair of shoes every day and there are people who would rather live in sandals.

Proving we are different is easy. But what's important is we aren't different by accident. As Christians, we believe that God made us who we are on purpose. It would have been easier for God to pull a Henry Ford

and churn out people who were alike. It would have been easier—and incredibly more boring. Life is better with Model-T's and Corvettes, or with Nissan's and Excursions. The same David who killed Goliath and eventually became the second King of Israel wrote this about our uniqueness: ¹³ ***You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.*** ¹⁴ ***Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.*** Psalm 139:13-14 (NLT)

This means you are the only you—which in some cases is all the world can take! You're one-of-a-kind. A limited edition. This is so much bigger than our fingerprints! Everything that makes you the person you are is unique to you...it's who you are. Our personality, passions, skills, abilities, strengths, weaknesses—everything that makes us who we are as a person is part of God's personal plan for each of us, individually.

Who you are = Person

We all would like to believe there is more to life than just being created unique and on purpose. Don't get me wrong, it's great to know WHO you are, but it's like the quote from William Barclay: *"There are two great days in a person's life—the day we are born and the day we discover why."* Knowing WHO you are is great start but, knowing WHY you are is greater. Discovering WHO you are is important. And that's a relatively easy endeavor. But like Barclay said, we want to know more than WHO we are. We want to know WHY we are WHO we are...we want to discover our purpose.

Why you are = Purpose

Great news—as a Christian, we don't need to struggle with clarity of life purpose. We can know WHO we are and WHY we are. Jesus knew we were going to ask these questions and seek out purpose. His Disciples

were probably wondering the same thing. At one point, pretty early in Jesus' ministry, he gathered up these guys and began to teach them about their purpose. These guys were all unique. Some were fishermen, one a former tax collector. Some were more laid back, some were out there. Some questioned and some trusted and one even betrayed Jesus. They were all very unique but, they were also created on purpose, with purpose, for a purpose.

Here's what he tells them, and what he tells each of us who is a Jesus-follower today, too: **Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV) 14 "You are the light of the world...**

The Disciples may not have seen themselves as lights in the world...even if the prophet Isaiah said that the Jewish nation would be a "light" unto the Gentiles, but that's not what Jesus was getting at. The disciples probably thought, "No way Jesus. You've got it wrong." But Jesus turns this back to them individually and says to them, **14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.** Jesus often gave illustrations to help people understand his point. In this case, he references how towns built on a hills can be seen for miles. Cities were often constructed of white limestone, so during the day they would shine brightly as the sun hit them. They weren't easily hidden—nor were they meant to be hidden. At night, residence would light lamps in their homes and around the city so they could be seen...on purpose. **15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.** This seems like basic, common sense. Nobody would do that! You light a lamp at night so you can see. It has a clear purpose, and its placement matters just the same. Lights are created on purpose and placed for purpose.

Since you ARE a light, let your light SHINE!

Since you ARE a light, let your light—your uniquely created life—that part of you that was created on purpose, your unique, one-of-a-kind light—let your light...*SHINE!* Light has a purpose: to SHINE. You are a light created to *shine* before others. To shine to help others see. Just like the city and the lamp, you are created on purpose and placed for purpose. You are a light that has been created and placed with care and purpose. You are **created** on purpose and **placed** for purpose. Here's the purpose: To Glorify God. ***16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.***

As a Christian, our purpose is to illuminate a better way. To illuminate not just a good life, but a much better version of living. To illuminate eternity and change those around you, because when people see your light, they will see the light of the world—Jesus. The unique combination of who you are and why you are gives is our unique purpose. God made you uniquely you to be a unique light in unique places. Everything you ARE is unique to who you are. I know you don't see yourself as a light, but you are. You are a doctor, salesman, mom, dad, parent, coach, and HOA member. But that's not WHO you are—that's what you do! You are a light! You were created to be a light. A uniquely created light on purpose and for purpose.

Where you are: Placement.

And, your light has been given an opportunity to shine in unique places. I have places where my light can shine that you don't. And you have places to shine that I'll never see. Your light is unique and so is your placement. You think your placement was random. You didn't choose this city, you were transferred to this city. You work at that company because they hired you, not because God placed you. But what if where you work is less important than your purpose at work? What if where you live is less

important than what you do where you live. What if your purpose is to be a reflection of the Light every place you go?

What you are: a reflection of God's light

Shining the Light of Jesus is why we exist—what's the purpose of life—as a Christian. So, how can you shine a light:

1. Share your faith
2. Invite a friend to Church
3. Serve someone in need
4. Help the next generation
5. Live generously
6. Show grace and love. Accept others. Forgive others.

And when we do it, people will see our good deeds—our life, our light, our care and compassion—and they will praise God. They will see God. They will experience a loving Heavenly Father. If you want to discover your unique purpose, simply answer three questions:

Who are you? - Person

Why are you? - Purpose

Where are you? - Placement

Where has God placed you? What is your unique light and place? What are you uniquely created and uniquely placed to do? Can I tell you why I think this is so important? Why Jesus choose to call you and I a light?

[ILLUSTRATION with LAMPS: To conclude this message, we'll use an illustration to help make it memorable. Place lamps and individual lights on the stage behind where you are speaking. Turn out as many lights as possible. As you walk through each example below, turn on a lamp to signify the light in that place illuminating a better way.]

Unfortunately, darkness is the default of life. We know that, because we were all there at some point. Many of us might still be there today. When you become a Christian, we leave our spiritual darkness behind. But God's not content for a few of us to live in the light. He's not okay with anyone remaining in the dark. The darkness is everywhere we go... but we have been given a great opportunity and purpose to allow our light to be a light that shines into the darkness and illuminates a path to a better way—a path to our Heavenly Father.

[INDIVIDUAL EXAMPLES, turning on a lamp with each example]

- **WORK:** I know you just feel like you work for the weekend. Instead of seeing yourself as a salesman, doctor, accountant, writer, or even a pastor, what if you saw yourself as a light in the workplace? What if God made you and placed you to be a light? What if God is less concerned with your job and more concerned with you being a light at your job?
- **COACH:** I know you are just coaching your son's baseball team or daughter's cheer squad. I know you are volunteering and trying to do the best you can to teach a sport and maybe even win some games. But what if instead of being a coach, your purpose was to be a light?
- **STUDENT:** Instead of a student in a high school or a college campus, what if you went to class tomorrow morning as a light?
- **SINGLE MOM:** You are a single mom. You are working so hard to keep the family together. To provide. To be there for your kids. But what if instead of being a single mom, you saw yourself the way Jesus sees you: as a light in your family?
- **NEIGHBORHOOD:** What if instead of just being a family who lives in a house on a street in a neighborhood, instead, you were a light? HOA member.

Think of every place you go. God's plan for each life is to be a reflection of the Light. You are a one-of-a-kind, created on purpose, and placed on purpose light of the world. I know you don't always feel that way. I know you can't imagine where you are "placed" was done with much purpose, but everywhere you go is an opportunity to be a light. And you have great purpose. When you combine your unique person with your unique placement, you discover an incredibly personal, unique purpose, one that is unique to you—and people will see your light, your good deeds, and instead of seeing you, maybe your light will illuminate a new path. Maybe they will see something they've never seen before—THEIR HEAVENLY FATHER.