

Does Life Have a Purpose?

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

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“Then what is life for? To die? To kill myself at once? No, I am afraid. To wait for death till it comes? I fear that even more. Then I must live. But what for? In order to die?” —Leo Tolstoy

“Life is just a dirty trick, a short journey from nothingness to nothingness.” —Ernest Hemingway

“The mass of men live lives of quiet desperation.” —Henry David Thoreau

The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference. —Richard Dawkins

“Meaningless! Meaningless!”
says the Teacher.

“Utterly meaningless!
Everything is meaningless.” (Ecclesiastes 1:2)

Life is meaningless without God. But God gives everything meaning.

I. All the pleasures of this life are worthless without God.

I said to myself, “Look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge.” Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind.

For with much wisdom comes much sorrow;
the more knowledge, the more grief. (Ecclesiastes 1:16-18)

“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. (1 Chronicles 28:9)

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:13)

So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31-33)

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. (Romans 1:25)

So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done. The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. (1 Kings 11:6, 9)

II. God has given us two particularly meaningful purposes: Loving Him and Loving Others.

One of [the religious leaders], an expert in the law, tested Jesus with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

He replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:35-40)

We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)

For you created my inmost being;

you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made... (Psalms 139:13-14)

...for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (Philippians 2:13)

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10)

III. Finding our true purpose begins with admitting our real problem.

Here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. (Romans 2:5)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 6:23)

Those the LORD has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away. (Isaiah 51:11)

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (Psalms 16:11)

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. –Jesus (John 10:10b)