

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**October 15, 2023. "Connected: What are we longing for?"**

### **I Intro.**

It's fall y'all. Enjoying the cooler weather? Things have cranked back up and we want you to be a part of this great community. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC, and that you can be an essential part of us moving forward. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

### **II Recap.**

There's a lot of foundational information to this series. And we don't want to bury you under all of it. So, we'll try to keep it as brief as possible. This series is solely about deep meaningful, mutual relationships that help us grow. It's not just about friendships or the number of people we're around on a daily basis. We all have lots of people in our lives. But the primary questions are; do those people in our lives challenge us, encourage us, and are a source of wisdom and insight? And does our connection to them work to make us better people? Connection isn't about just being around people. Connection is about having an inner circle of others who are all moving in the same direction we are. They may be different from us in a lot of ways. And the more diverse our connections the better. But do we benefit from our relationship with each other?

The first week we talked about disconnecting from being disconnected. Sometimes we drift into not having meaningful, mutual, relationships, and we find ourselves isolated. Just out there on our own. We talked about what may cause us to isolate and how to push past that.

Today, we talk about why we were created, and how connections can help us be the best us.

### **III Sunday.**

I'm not really sure where to begin on this topic. There are literally tens of thousands of books that are written about finding, working for, fulfilling our purpose. Tapping into that longing deep inside of us that wants more out of life. They run the gamut from fluffy feel good, 'just follow your heart' type of books, to highly strategic corporate type books that have you work through this multistep process of determining what your strengths, passions, skill set are. Then working the process to get there. And of course everything in between. What we're going to find is a fairly easily spelled out understanding of what our purpose is. What we long for. And get this...it's found in scripture. Go figure...right?

Before we dive into the passage, let's find out about your understanding of purpose.

**How do you understand what finding our purpose looks like?**

**Do you believe there are any commonalities for all of us about what our purpose might be?**

**How do you see any divine connection to what our purpose is?**

For the scripture we go back again to the creation account. There is an overarching narrative in creation that speaks to what we were originally designed for. What our purpose is. And, if we can bring some contextual understanding to that passage, we can begin to find some underlying, deeper, truths that can speak to our understanding and practice of what our purpose is. This will help us get in touch with this deeper, more profound, longing we all often experience. So read **Genesis 1:26-31** and we'll pull out some of these truths.

**What jumped out to you from this passage?**

**What specific phrases or words spoke to you about longing and purpose?**

We often stay on the surface level of this account just talking about the details. There is a large overarching truth that should speak to our very inner self. Our soul, our divine spirit. And since we are a body, our complete self, should connect to this. Our purpose is to enjoy God and creation. This should be at the very center of who we are. This is what we genuinely long for.

Some truths we can pull from this passage.

**We were created to create and steward.** The word "*reign*" means to be handed something that's not yours and take care of it like it was. We have an authoritarian view of reigning. Being in charge. I'm the boss, I get to make the calls. In scripture even government leaders were believed to be given that authority by God. "*Reign*" didn't mean, do whatever you want. "*Reign*" means; I have given you the authority and responsibility to steward this. It's the **Parable of the talents**.

You have this divine planting inside of you, the image of God, and a deep desire to find joy in accomplishment, creating new and beautiful things. You just may not have found just what it is yet. But THIS is what we long for. This is what brings meaning to life. This is what we're really chasing when we're chasing all of these other things that we think will bring this.

**We were created to create and steward...with others.** God gave us everything we see around us to run the world well. To take care of all of creation. And to be a co-creator with God. This is our deepest longing and the felt need for our lives to matter. And within our divinely planted longing and purpose, we were created to do it with others.

**"I have given you everything you need, and the authority to steward it, be in charge. I also have given you each other. Just make the most of it that you can."**

*"Be fruitful and multiply"* actually means to bear fruit, to create, and procreate. To live with others in this work. To flourish, thrive, to generate abundance. To take what I've given you and increase it. To make more to share. This is about the satisfaction and joy of something completed we can be proud of. There is something, we talked about the image of God, the Imago Dei, that we are created in.

**Where in your life are you connected with a group of people who are trying to do something meaningful?** Most likely there are people out there already doing something you just haven't discovered yet. Join with them!!

**Connection is how we accomplish our divine purpose (wiring)** It is through connection that gives our divine purpose meaning. Ever get home at the end of the day and want to share something really good that you did that day? We all have this. If you live by yourself, or for whatever reason you find yourself alone for a period of time, there is this ache, hole, of not having someone to share that with. That's why social media can be a great place for connection. It is through, within, connection that our longing is complete. The problem is we get so distracted, and disconnected along the way and we

miss the joy of shared connection. Our soul needs to create, recreate, grow, thrive, flourish. This is what we were designed to do. And we need to be freed up (that's why we did the freedom series) from the things that inhibit us from experiencing what we're actually longing for. We were created to enjoy and create. To join God in caring for his creation. It is in community, connected to others, that we hone, perfect and enjoy this gift.

**What can you do, make, throw yourself into, create that benefits the world, and you find immeasurable joy from?** This may take some trial and error. You may have to chase a few things, test, experiment, to find the things that bring joy. That fulfills your divine purpose. That satisfies that longing deep inside of you.

### **VI Challenge.**

Again, this was a lot. But the topic of longing, purpose, meaning, living fully into what we were created for, is a massive topic. We hope we gave you a few things you could hold onto, incorporate into your daily lives, that will help you discover not only your purpose, satisfy that longing deep inside of you. But will also help move you to a deeper place of connection with others, in which you can guide each other to this higher calling. It's what we're made for.