

WEEK OF MARCH 19



DAY
1

A People on Purpose Genesis 1:28-30

The original motto of the Hard Rock Café was “Love All, Serve All.” Quite a purpose statement! Perhaps it was inspired by the Bible, which in its essence calls us to “Love God, Love Others.” Read Deuteronomy 6 and you will see how God gives this purpose statement depth and meaning, not just for ourselves but for our children and their children and their children.

Genesis 1:28-30 shows how God created his people for a purpose from the very beginning. He gives us his good creation to care for and to benefit from.

God created Israel for a purpose. He created the Church for a purpose. Each of us reading this is on earth for a limited time with a purpose. So, what is our purpose as the people of God in the 21st century?

Our purpose is to love God with all that we are and to reflect God’s love to everyone around us.

Consider these questions as we think about being a people on purpose this week:

God calls the ordinary, down-to-earth people to be his messengers (see Matthew 10 and the calling of 12 men—fishermen, farmers, tax collector, political activist, etc). How do you relate to that reality?

God gives a BIG purpose and vision: to love and bless others! What is your part in that this week?

DAY
2

A “Peculiar” People Deuteronomy 7:6-9

The author Rodney Clapp coined the term “A Peculiar People” in his book by that title. By “peculiar” he means counter-cultural—different in the very best sense of the word.

Read Deuteronomy 7:6-9. God calls this peculiar people (ancient Israel and now the Church) out of all peoples on earth and calls us “his treasured possession.” Take a few moments and reflect on that truth.

It is somewhat of a mystery to us as to why God would call US—and why he called Israel. We are not the mightiest people, and surely we are not without our problems and brokenness and sin. Israel was called a “stiff-necked people” by God. If you haven’t noticed, the Church is not perfect by any measure!

And yet, God is always faithful (see v. 9) and he keeps his covenant to generation after generation after generation.

How are you peculiar? (funny question!) How does this reflect your love for God and Jesus to others?

What does it mean for you that God calls you for a purpose (to love and bless others)?

And what does it look like for you as part of a church community to be invited into this (think LifeGroup or other serving group).

DAY
3

God's Patience and Persistence

Isaiah 42:1-9, 18-25; 43:1-7

What happens when God's people lose their purpose? The overarching story of the Old Testament points to the answer to this question. There is an ever-growing tension between Israel forgetting their purpose, yet never ceasing to be God's people. They repeatedly go back and forth between their call to love God and others and obey his commandments, and "doing what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 17:6).

This culminates in Israel's lowest point—exile. In Isaiah 42-43, God describes Israel as a servant that was meant for amazing things, "I have called you for a righteous purpose (42:6)," but instead they have lost their way. "Who is blind like my dedicated one, or blind like the servant of the Lord? Though seeing many things, you pay no attention; though his ears are open he does not listen" (42:19-20).

This difficult truth is immediately followed by a promise of restoration. Take a moment and read Isaiah 43:1-7. "Do not fear," "I will be with you," "because you are precious in my sight." This is the language of a loving Father who longs to see his children experience the life he has for them, but who also understands the reality of how easily our hearts can wander from the good things he has for them.

Christopher Wright sums this idea up excellently when he says, "The mission of God's people is not a matter of how great we are at doing things for God, but a matter of how patient and persistent God is in doing things through us." That patience doesn't just promise a return from exile but also points to another, more perfect Servant, Jesus, who will "not grow weak or be discouraged until he has established justice on the earth" (Isaiah 42:4).

Think about a time you felt like you lost your purpose (maybe it's even right now). What did your relationship with God look like?

How can you find encouragement in God's patience and persistence in difficult times?

DAY
4

Jesus' Mission, Our Mission

Ephesians 2:8-10, Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Peter 2:9

Jesus is the ultimate example of a life lived on purpose. In Luke 4:18-19, he reads the words of Isaiah and says that he has fulfilled them: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

We follow Jesus' example of what a life lived with purpose and mission looks like. We are meant to represent Jesus in our community. All Christians have the same mission to love God and love our neighbors. Ephesians 2:8-10 reminds us that God wants us to do good works. And Matthew 28:18-20 reminds us that we are to go into all of the world and make disciples of Jesus.

On Day 2, you read Deuteronomy 7:6-9, where Israel was called God's treasured possession. The New Testament has some very similar language. In 1 Peter 2:9, the Church is called God's "special possession." A few verses later, we are given the mission to live such good lives that people will look at us and glorify God.

This mission can feel daunting. Maybe reading those verses makes you feel energized. Or maybe you read them and feel intimidated. Thankfully, we are not alone in our mission. We have one another, and we have the Holy Spirit, guiding us and leading us in our lives of purpose.

How does it feel to be called to live such good lives that people look at you and praise God?

How are you doing at living on mission?

What does loving God and loving your neighbor look like in your present context?

PERSONAL REFLECTION & LIFEGROUP CONVERSATION

Before you dive into this week's group questions, start with a few moments of catching up. How was your week? How can your group pray for one another? What was one thing that brought you delight this week?

ONE: What do you think about when you think of purpose? Have you ever thought about a personal mission statement? How would you define your purpose in life?

TWO: God says that for his followers one of our main missions is to love God and others. How are you fulfilling this purpose?

THREE: Have you ever felt like you lost your sense of purpose? What was that experience like for you?

FOUR: For many of us, our jobs are related to our sense of purpose. How does your job fit into your mission? How can you love God and love others at work?

As a closing group prayer, ask God to guide you this week in loving him and loving others well.