

What about me?

Welcome back to Walking with Purpose! For the last few weeks we've been talking about fulfilling our purpose of bringing pleasure to God. That's our #1 purpose, and is really the definition of "worship." Worship is not a style of music, an act done in moments of slow, meditative instrumentals, or a 10 minute segment of your personal quiet time. Worship is a ***lifestyle*** you are called to walk in! Although bringing God pleasure will intermingle with our other four purposes, this is the foundation. It's seeking Him and His righteousness first; caring more about His pleasure than our own. Realizing that life doesn't revolve around me, but rather Him!

David Brainerd was a missionary to the Indians who died at the age of twenty-nine. His diary reveals a young man intensely committed to God. Brainerd once said to Jonathan Edwards: "I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honor to God. It is no matter ***where*** I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high seat or a low seat there. My heaven is to please God and glorify Him, and give all to Him, and to be wholly devoted to His glory."



Fellowship

1. Describe a time this last week when your focus on God was derailed and your life revolved around you.



Discipleship

Death is rarely pleasant, and dying to self is downright painful! It sounds so easy when I quote Matthew 6:33, "But seek ***first*** his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." But living it out? That means dying to my goals, my desires, my cravings, and anything that isn't God's best for me. It means caring more about God's opinion than my own. Being willing to set aside anything I want in deference to what ***He*** wants; realizing that I was made for God, not vice versa. C.S. Lewis said, "There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done' and those to whom God says, 'All right then, have it your way.'"

Dr. Alexander Popaderos, a Greek philosopher, taught a class on ethics. One day, just as he was getting ready to close the class, he asked, "Are there any questions before we go?" A timid-looking little man in the back of the room carefully raised his hand and said, "Dr. Popaderos, I have a question. I'd like to know, what is the meaning of life?"

As you can imagine, the other students (ready to go home) were irritated by this little fellow's weighty question! Dr. Popaderos very quickly quieted the group, reached into his back pocket, and took out his wallet. He removed a little mirror about the size of a fifty-cent piece with sanded down edges. As he held up the sparkling mirror, he told this tale: "When I was a child, I began to realize that I could have so much fun with this mirror. I would simply catch the glint of the sun, and shine my mirror into an otherwise darkened place. As I grew older I began to learn that this is no child's toy. This is really a metaphor for my life. I am not the light...and I am not the *source* of the light. I am simply a broken mirror fragment. But if I allow the sun to shine on my mirror fragment, it is amazing what light I can bring to the darkness." Then he said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, *that* is the meaning of life."

Each of us is a mirror fragment. We are not the Light. We are not the source of the Light. We are simply a broken mirror fragment. But when we permit "the light of the world" to hit our mirror fragment, and then bounce off into a darkened world, change occurs! There can be illumination. Let's carry the analogy of the sun one step further: the earth revolves around it! Yet how often do I fall into the trap of thinking the earth and my life revolves around me?

Kari Malcolm served for 15 years as a missionary to the Philippines and grew up as a missionary kid in China. As a teenager, she was confined for a time during World War II in an internment camp, and there she discovered a deep truth that changed her life. In the camp she was simply labeled "number 16". She sought self-identity and comfort behind the walls and the electric fence that separated her from the outside world. There were other missionary children in the same predicament, and often they managed to get together for a few moments of prayer--prayer for freedom. But as time passed, Kari began to feel uneasy about these times of prayer. Freedom was becoming the ultimate goal in life, and God seemed to become less and less important--except for His answer to their prayers for freedom. As she began to pray and search the Bible, Kari came to a new outlook on life, and she no longer desired to join the others in their prayers for freedom. It was only then that Kari was able to pray the prayer that changed her life: "Lord, I am willing to stay in this prison for the rest of my life if only I may know You." At that moment, she was truly free! Because only as we surrender our purposes to His can we find rest.

Watchman Nee said, "I have never met a soul who has set out to satisfy the Lord and has not been satisfied himself." An old mystic once said, "We have no ease of heart or soul, for we are seeking our rest in trivial things that cannot satisfy, and not seeking to know God, almighty, all-wise, all good. He is true rest. It is His will that we should know Him, and His pleasure that we should rest in Him. Nothing less will satisfy."

The closer you live to God, the smaller everything else appears. Problems that now seem all-consuming pale in comparison to the greatness of God. But how do we make our life all about God and less about us? Turn with me to Luke 12:22-34 and let's read it together. "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'"

Notice in verse 29 Jesus talks about what we "set" our hearts on. When you find yourself thinking more about the temporal than the eternal, more about yourself than others or God, or worrying about temporary problems, stop and hand over the problem to God. Verse 31 commands us to "seek" His kingdom! That means to strive for; aim for; focus on. Realize that our world revolves around the Son. This week, I challenge you to start every day with a simple prayer of commitment: "God, I give this day to You. Make of it what **You** want. Make your priorities mine." Offer your bodies and schedules as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. **This** is your spiritual act of worship!

2. Re-read Luke 12:22-34. If you are to obey verse 31, how will your life need to change?
3. What's a good litmus test, according to verse 34, of who your life revolves around?
4. Read Romans 12:1. What will offering your body to God look like in your life this week?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. When your eyes aren't fixed on the eternal, on what are they usually fixed?
6. Discuss the quote by John Piper: "The weakness of our hunger for God is not because he is unsavory, but because we keep ourselves stuffed with other things."



Ministry

7. If anyone in your small group has not had the opportunity to share their salvation experience, have them do so today. Or, if they have not yet committed their life to Christ—they can share why.
8. Share one specific prayer request for this coming week. How can your small group encourage you to live a life that's God-focused? Pray specifically for each member.



Worship

Before you leave...next week your group will be given the chance to share communion together. If your group or church feels comfortable doing this, then take a volunteer to make preparations.

9. Read Psalm 100 and if you feel comfortable, sing a song of praise together.