

Life Group Lesson - Week of May 7

Have you discovered your purpose, your reason for being alive? Many of us spend a lifetime in search of this. As children we begin to realize we are part of something bigger. Something within us begins to stir. There is a longing to discover our purpose, to fulfill our destiny. We sense what the writer of Ecclesiastes expressed: “Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

We only have one life to live and each day is a gift. Deep down most of us want to believe the world is a better place because we are here. “For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2). The pages of your life are being written now. Are you satisfied with what you are writing? Have you discovered your purpose or are you living into your shadow mission, spending your talents, gifts, and energies on yourself? Living only for ourselves leaves us looking for more.

The woman at the well in John, chapter four was looking for more. She was tired of this life and her search for love left her thirsty and dissatisfied. Then she met Jesus, the source of living water. Although she had made many mistakes, Christ was willing to meet her right in her shame. Nicodemus had been trusting in spiritual pedigree to make him right with God. Deep down he sensed something was not right. He was in search for more. He wanted answers so he came to Jesus by night.

Read John 4:1-26 and John 3:1-21

The *rambler* follows his or her heart. The problem with the heart is that it can lead us astray. The prophet says: “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is” (Jeremiah 17:9). Often the rambler experiences the most severe midlife crisis, because doing “your best” leads to a life of endless repetition and monotony.

1. How do you identify with the rambler, always searching but never satisfied?

The *rebel* says my freedom is my purpose. They want to forge their own path. The rebel chooses not to believe in God because a relationship with God would only confine and limit freedom. Like Samson in Judges 13 - 16, we may sense a call upon our life, but we refuse to live into that call. Instead, we fall into our shadow mission, where we get to be in control. We ignore signs of impending disaster, and after using up all our days demanding our freedom, find ourselves blind and in chains.

2. How do you identify with the rebel, the one who is forever demanding his or her own freedom?

The *religious* say God loves me because I am doing all the right things. The religious look for enough of God to satisfy, but he or she is unwilling to let God transform their heart. Nicodemus in John 3 was intelligent, religious, wealthy, well-respected. He had it all together on the outside. But Jesus says, “Nicodemus, you must be born again.” What Jesus tells this well-dressed aristocrat of Jerusalem, he says to us all: Go back to the beginning (like a little baby and be born again) because nothing you have done so far counts toward you becoming a citizen of heaven.

3. How do you identify with the religious, that deep down because of your works-righteousness, you feel like God loves you a little bit more than the “sinner”?

This world will never satisfy in the long run. Jesus told the woman at the well: “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life” (John 4:13-14). Christ calls us to a purpose beyond ourselves, and true fulfillment is found when we align our life with His mission in the world. After meeting Christ, the woman ran back to tell everyone in her village: “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could He possibly be the Messiah?” ... then “the people came streaming from the village to see Him” and many believed (John 4:29-30,39).

4. In what specific areas can you see that Christ is making a difference in your life to date? How are you making a difference in the lives of those around you?

Where do you need to re-align? What are areas where you are struggling to surrender? What is keeping you from giving those areas to the Lord?

We can’t go back in time, but we can decide from this day forward to look to Christ instead of this world. Jesus told Nicodemus: “And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life” (John 4:14-15). Eternal life does not come from below. It comes from God. Sin comes from below. In Numbers 21:4-9, because of their rebellion, God sent poisonous snakes among the Israelites and many died. But in His mercy God instructed Moses to make a replica of the venomous snake and put it on a pole. Those who looked up were healed.

5. If your rambling, rebellion, and religious efforts have left you empty, it may be time for you to look up and become a *radical* for Christ’s mission in the world. Like the woman at the well, will you begin to share the Good News? Like Nicodemus, will you lay down religion and trust in Christ alone for new birth? Discuss how a life of significance—aligning with Christ’s mission in the world—results when we live for something bigger than ourselves.

a) List the names of 3 to 5 unchurched persons and pray for them as a group.



Text: John 3: 1-17

4 People in this Story

1. The _____

2. The _____

3. The _____

4. The _____

The Plain Truth

Salvation is our _____ in Christ
and purpose is found when we live for
something _____ ourselves.

One Year Bible Readings

May 7: 1 Samuel 1:1-2:21, John 5:1-23, Psalm 105:37-45, Proverbs 14:28-29
May 8: 1 Samuel 2:22-4:22, John 5:24-47, Psalm 106:1-12, Proverbs 14:30-31
May 9: 1 Samuel 5:1-7:17, John 6:1-21, Psalm 106:13-31, Proverbs 14:32-33
May 10: 1 Samuel 8:1-9:27, John 6:22-42, Psalm 106:32-48, Proverbs 14:34-35
May 11: 1 Samuel 10:1-11:15, John 6:43-71, Psalm 107:1-43, Proverbs 15:1-3
May 12: 1 Samuel 12:1-13:23, John 7:1-30, Psalm 108:1-13, Proverbs 15:4
May 13: 1 Samuel 14:1-52, John 7:31-53, Psalm 109:1-31, Proverbs 15:5-7