

## What's the Point?

**Isaiah 58:6-9 NLT** - *"<sup>6</sup>this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. <sup>7</sup>Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. <sup>8</sup>"Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. <sup>9</sup>**THEN** when you call, the Lord will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' He will quickly reply."*

**Illustration: "Up In the Air"** – *Pre-wedding scene - a young man is having second thoughts about getting married. The wedding ceremony is about to begin, but he has a serious case of cold feet. He's not sure he can go through with the wedding. A member of the family is sent to talk to him.*

*The young man says, "I don't think I'll be able to do this." The family member asks, "Why would you say that today?" The frightened young man says, "Well, last night I was kinda like laying in bed, and I couldn't get to sleep, so I started thinking about the wedding and the ceremony and about our buying a house, and having a kid, and then having another kid, and then Christmas and Thanksgiving and spring break, and going to football games, and then all of a sudden they are graduated and going to college, and graduation and getting jobs and getting married and, you know, I'm a grandparent, and then I'm retired, and I'm losing my hair, and I'm getting fat, and the next thing I know I'm dead. And it's like, I can't stop from thinking, what's the point? I mean, what is the point?"*

So, What's the Point? People can sometimes be filled with so many questions. Questions about all areas of life. Worries about things that may or may not even take place. The point is to find purpose. What is the purpose of the things we do and the way we live our lives?

It is important to keep purpose in mind. The purpose of any organization should be its guiding principal and should influence everything it does. If certain activities do not reinforce or contradict its purpose, they should be abandoned. Every activity should be measured against the purpose.

Purpose – *"the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists"*

**Mark 12:28-34** – *"<sup>28</sup>And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? <sup>29</sup>And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: <sup>30</sup>And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. <sup>31</sup>And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. <sup>32</sup>And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: <sup>33</sup>And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. <sup>34</sup>And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question."*

This religious leader asked Jesus, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" he was basically asking, "What is the point? What matters most?" There are a lot of potential answers to that question, from money to success to beauty to power to fame. But Jesus says what matters most is relationships with God and others.

**What's the point of Church?** Why are there churches and why should we go? Wouldn't we be better off without this religion stuff? Man is created in the image of God. Deny that and we regress, not progress. We become part of the animal kingdom instead of being human. We are created in God's image—we are body, soul and spirit. We are spiritual beings. In fact, our spirit is our defining attribute. Without spiritual food, we regress into beings driven by our bodies.

**What's the point of trying to sell everyone on Christianity?** Ok, I get the religion thing. It's good to have a "spiritual focus" in our lives. But there are many ways to satisfy that spiritual itch—lots of paths, lots of choices. Isn't it kind of pushy, arrogant, and exclusive to say Christianity is not just the best choice, but the only choice? There are 2 reasons Christianity is the only choice:

1. Man cannot produce anything spiritual, we can only reproduce human effort and thinking. Anything that doesn't come from God will not satisfy the spiritual longing and needs. Only God can fill the God space in each of us. Jesus is The Way, The Truth, The Life. He is God and Christianity is His way to fill our spiritual being. (John 3:6; John 6:63; John 3:31)
2. The universe was created by God, with laws that keep order. Laws like gravity, relativity, speed of light and sound. Laws that govern our body,

like we must breathe, eat, drink and exercise. That life is in our blood. Laws like reaping and sowing—you must plant a seed to get a harvest. Adam planted sin—separation from God—and we reap death. The law had to be satisfied but there had to be a sinless human to satisfy it—Jesus. There had never been a sinless human, and there will never be another. He is the only one—therefore He is the only Way. (John 14:6)

**What's the point of taking church so seriously?** Why not just have a good church but not be so involved and driven? I work hard, I play hard, I am a good family person. When I do come to church I want to experience God's presence, I don't want it to be boring, and I want to interact with others. It would be good if the message was practical and inspiring. I want my kids to have a good experience, I don't want to have to drag them here, and as they get older I want a strong youth program to help keep them from getting into trouble and focused spiritually. I think the grounds should look nice. I want the bathrooms to be clean. I like the bonus of free coffee and even a café. I think it would be nice if the music is good and I think we ought to help people out when we can.

But what's the point of joining this "Dream Team" and getting involved. I'm busy. What's the point of Connect Groups? I don't need any more friends. The Church is God's plan for the world. It is the hope of the world. It is the only institution on this planet empowered by God with the ability to transform lives and bring hope. And our participation in it and with it is the way the world--our friends, neighbors, relatives and associates—will see Jesus in action.

Our own lives find fulfillment when we find our place in ministry, and the whole church—the worldwide body of Christ—is made stronger when each of us take our place in that Body. When we connect to each other we find our **destiny**, our purpose and our fulfillment. We become stronger. Our connections empower our future. Our church, like our marriage, cannot be our hobby.

**Ephesians 3:8 The Message** - *"Through followers of Jesus like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels!"*

**What's the point of living righteously?** If Jesus' sacrifice is what makes me right with God, what's the point of studying the Word, praying, fasting, and giving? Why not just do my best and not be "so different"? Again, **2 reasons**: 1)you and 2)the rest of the world.

The more I know Him, the more I am around Him; the more I am around His presence, the more I become like Him. If I am bigger and better on the inside than I am on the outside, then the things on the outside do not rock my world

and cause me to stumble spiritually. I am more peaceful and full of joy because I know where I stand with God. On top of that, when I put His priorities, His Kingdom first, I don't have to worry. He has it handled.

**What's the point of being baptized?** What's the big deal about baptism? - It's a "public profession" of your choice to follow Jesus. It's a statement to yourself and to those around you that you have chosen to follow Jesus. It's not just a religious ritual or tradition—it is an empowering of the Holy Spirit.

**What's the point of being filled with His Spirit?** Jesus informed His disciples before and after His resurrection that He would have to go away so the Father could send the Comforter, or the Holy Spirit. Jesus' word were more than comforting as He revealed to His followers the ability of the Spirit in our lives to lead us, guide us, teach us, speak to us, speak through us, etc. in the power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit within a person makes us holy, righteous, worthy, etc. Without the Holy Ghost in our lives, we are powerless to combat the tricks, the lies, the plans, and the destruction the enemy brings to our lives. The Holy Spirit causes us to be overcomers.

**1 Corinthians 2:14 NLT** - *"But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means."*

### **To follow God we must...**

- 1. Leave your comfort zone.** You can't be comfortable and obedient to the will of God at the same time. God usually has to make us uncomfortable so that we will trust in Him and not ourselves.
- 2. Leave your fears.** No one likes rejection, and we are told over and over again that not all people will accept what God is doing. God wants us to trust His plan even though it is not easy.
- 3. Leave your pride.** We can't be stubborn and do it our way and be obedient at the same time. You must get right with God before you can move forward with Him. Others before yourself.
- 4. Leave your past.** You can never go forward looking back. A crash is inevitable when you do. Forget the past. Leave the failures, the troubles, the wrong done to you, the missed opportunities, the "shoulda, coulda, woulda's"!

The Spirit prompts you how to live. When the flesh says look out for yourself or be greedy, the Spirit says, "put others first." When the flesh says, "my spouse is not treating me the way he/she should, the Spirit says, "put the interests of your

spouse ahead of your own." We must submit ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit. When He prompts, we must respond.

What is the point? The answer is simple: to have love God and others.

**Closing Story:**

*A churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."*

*This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: "I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today."*

*Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"*

What is the point of preaching? ...to challenge and encourage response to the Word of God.

When you live in the purpose God desires for you not only will you know it, but God and others will know it, too! The POINT IS...you were made for this! What will you do about it???