



Sermon Study Guide
4/29/18

Gods' grace growing in us, among us, and through us, bringing the fullness of Jesus Christ to all of life.

Series Theme

iChoose

Sermon Title

Purpose vs. Popularity (Shea Strickland)

Key Sermon Points

- The choices we make inevitably affect our lives. You will be the decisions you are making today.
- A life of full approval does not exist. People have opinions and we must guard against choosing to conform to the opinions of the world around us (popularity).
- One of the most important choices we have as followers of Christ is to live in and for his purposes.
- If you don't understand a thing, you consult the creator of that thing about how it works and is to be used.
- You are uniquely created by God and you are better at being you than anyone else could be.
- Hebrews 11 outlines those people who famously followed the purpose of God rather than the opinions of others.
- Moses chose to leave the prosperous and privilege of a prince of Egypt to follow the calling and purpose of God.
- Micah 6:8 tells us that we are to: Do justice, Love mercy, and Walk humbly. That is God's purpose for all of us and it enlivens us as we live in it.
- Purpose:
 - Diminishes distractions
 - We live in an age of distractions.
 - The curse of comparison leads us to bad decisions.
 - Nehemiah experienced opposition and ridicule as he rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, his response was "I cannot come down because I am a doing a good work."

- Pushes us through the pain
 - Life is not all roses. Moses, Nehemiah, Mary, etc. all went through pain to follow God's purpose.
 - Jesus experienced the cross to accomplish God's great plan of redemption for us.
 - Athletes train and endure pain for the purpose of winning. Pain is required to build us up.
- Empowers us to please God
- If we believe that God has created us with a purpose and that He is working to fulfill it, we can experience great confidence and strength.

Scripture: Hebrews 11:24-26, Nehemiah 4 - 6, Hebrews 12:2, Ephesians 2:10

Personal Application

1. Review your purpose this week. Do you know what God is calling you to in your finances? Your work? Your relationships? Your family? Your walk with God?
2. As you review your purpose(s) also review your distractions. What (or who) might be keeping you from fully experiencing or following God's purpose(s)?
2. Memorize Ephesians 2:10 this week. Print it, post it in a prominent place and review it several times each day... "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

Discussion Questions: (conversations)

1. What are your most hindering distractions? How do you do battle against them?
2. How confident are you about God's purpose(s) for your life? What has/is God calling you to?
3. Spend some time considering the men and women listed in Hebrews Chapter 11. What was their purpose? What were their possible distractions? How did they stay focused on what God had for them?
4. In what way(s) might you be able to help others in your family, work, church, life group, etc. to find or stay focused on the unique purpose for which God has created them?

Life Groups

Use the discussion questions above (and others as you are led) as you consider choices between popularity and purpose. Is there a way in which your group could pursue more life giving choices together?

Children & Families

Talk with your children about times when they feel pressure to be popular or liked or to conform. Have them create a "self-portrait" (in words or pictures) of the person that God has created them to be.

Other Resources

Reclaiming Your Identity: Embrace Who God Created You to Be: by Eric Wayman

Who am I, and what am I here for? Our lives depend on how we answer that question. It will affect everything from our career choices to the way we relate to God and others. But where

can we turn to find the answer? Our friends? Our job title? Our relationship status? Many of us base our identity off what we do or the number of likes we get on a post. We constantly perform for other people's approval, and then we wonder why we feel so exhausted and insecure. But what's the alternative? What if we allowed the One who created us to answer the question for us? Eric Wayman, a pastor, professor, and disciple, invites us to pull away the masks we have been hiding behind and allow God to show us who we are and what he made us to do.

Created--Experience Your Unique Purpose: by Josh McDowell, Sean McDowell

Created--Experience Your Unique Purpose (The Unshakable Truth Journey® growth guide #1) is devoted to the truth that God is--he exists, and he created human beings for a reason. It lays a foundation for who people are because they're God's creation, who God designed them to be, and how they can live a life of fulfillment.