

Campus Church of Christ Jail Ministry
Teacher's Guide
Series 1: Lesson #3
"You Were Planned for God's Pleasure", Part A
(from *The Purpose Driven Life*¹)

(all **green** text is for the teacher)

Preparation:

1. Read the sections for Days 8-9 in *The Purpose Driven Life*.
2. Review the scripture references in the lesson and related passages in your Bible; there are too many to use in the class, so be selective.
3. Read through the teacher's version of the lesson; make notes / changes as desired.
4. Pick up the following from the Jail Ministry Table:
 - attendance/prayer request sheets
 - enough copies of lesson handout for the inmates in your pod (Remember, **don't** staple the pages.)
 - correspondence courses to give out to inmates who desire one
5. Other optional materials to bring:
 - White board marker and eraser
 - Sharpened pencils for inmates to use (be sure to collect all of them before they leave the room)

Before and as students arrive:

1. Welcome students and distribute student handouts
2. Make sure that any inmates who don't have a Bible know that they can fill out an inmate request form to get one that is provided to the jail by the church.
3. Pass the attendance roster / prayer request sheets around.
4. Always extend a greeting of encouragement and hope as inmates are arriving.
5. Open the class / lesson with a prayer.

Focus points for this Lesson:

(main points to emphasize through the lesson and to summarize in conclusion. If white board and marker are available, as you conclude and summarize each point, write it on the board.)

- We were created by God for His pleasure.
- Anything we do that brings glory and pleasure to God is worship.
- If we do not worship God, we will worship something else.
- Worship is a result of being in love with Jesus.
- Worship is not a part of your life; it IS your life.
- Five ways to worship God that please Him:
 - Love Him.
 - Trust Him.
 - Obey Him.
 - Praise and thank Him.
 - Be ourselves.

“You Were Planned for God’s Pleasure”, Part A

Introduction

We live in a world that is all about pleasure. “If it feels good, do it!” is a common cliché. We are bombarded by messages from TV, magazines, the Internet, billboards, sales people and even our friends and family to buy things, do things, and go places for the pleasure of it or because we feel pressure to meet a certain social standard or someone else’s expectations. As someone said, “We spend money we don’t have to buy things we don’t need, to impress people we don’t like!”

We think all this pleasure-seeking is going to bring us happiness. In reality, it tends to do just the opposite, because what we really and truly want and need is a relationship with our Creator. What the pleasure-seeking and pleasure-satisfying leaves us with is a never-ending hunger for more. It seems to satisfy for a moment, but then we are empty and searching again. We all want to be loved, We want to be happy. We long for true joy. Yet, we don’t even realize that the reason we never find what we are seeking is because we are looking in all the wrong places or going about it in all the wrong ways.

A man was on a trip when he got lost in the mountains. He stopped to ask for directions only to be told, “Man, you can’t get there from here. You have to start from the other side of the mountain!” When we try to get to a place of joy and purpose in our lives while traveling the road of self and pleasure, we will eventually discover that that road won’t get us there. We have to start from a “the other side of the mountain.” Instead of continuing to look inward or out, we must start at the place where we are looking upward.

As we have learned in previous lessons, finding real meaning and joy in life does not begin with us, and it is not even about us. It is all about God and our search must begin with Him if we are going to find the answers.

(Day 8)

PLANNED FOR GOD’S PLEASURE

Why is it necessary for us to begin our journey to purpose and joy with God rather than with ourselves?

(Encourage discussion. This question will provide a review of the concepts from previous lessons and the basis for the concepts in this lesson. You may want to review the Key Points Summary on the student handout.)

The main point of this section of Rick Warren’s book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, is “We were planned by God for His pleasure.” The Bible clearly tells us that this is so.

*You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power.
For you created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist*

and were created. **Revelation 4:11 (NLT)**

The Lord takes pleasure in his people. **Psalms 149:4a (TEV)**

His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure. **Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)**

One of the first things that we notice in these verses is that God has emotions. He feels pleasure. Throughout the Bible, God reveals to us that He is an emotional being. He can be happy, grieved, jealous, angry, feel sorrow, pity, compassion, love, joy, and yes, He even laughs. Because He made us in His image, He gave us these emotions, too. We can enjoy pleasure just as God does. We must always remember, too, that the very fact that each one of us was created by God, in His image, and for His pleasure makes us each very valuable. If we ever doubt our worth, this proves it!

Because of the fact that God created us for his pleasure, we can easily conclude then that our number one purpose in living is to bring enjoyment to God by living our lives for His pleasure. Because we are created in His image, we can also conclude that He created us to enjoy pleasure, also.

What does it mean to live our lives for God's pleasure? (responses and discussion. There is no specific answer, but they should recognize that everything they do should bring pleasure to God.)

One way that we pleasure God is by worshipping him. **What generally comes to mind when we think of worshipping God?** (responses and discussion; typical responses will be singing, praying, listening to a sermon, communion, etc.)

The dictionary² defines worship as

1. to honor and love as a deity
2. to regard with ardent and adoring esteem or devotion
3. to participate in religious rites of worship
4. to perform an act of worship

Key Point: Anything we do that brings glory and pleasure to God is worship. (p. 64)

Worship is more than something we do when we go to church. From this definition and from verses throughout the Bible, we learn that worship is much more than just singing, praying, listening to a sermon or taking communion. Worshipping God is much broader than that. It is actually anything and everything that we do in life that brings glory and pleasure to God. It is anything that shows honor and love for Him. It is anything that shows our deep love and devotion to Him.

God designed humans with a desire to worship Him. It is natural to us. In examining human history, regardless of the race or culture, we see that humans have always had a sense or knowledge that there was someone or something higher than themselves, and they desired to worship that deity. God designed us with this built-in desire and need because He wants our worship.

We have another misconception about worship: Worship is not for our benefit, but rather it is for God's benefit. When we leave a worship service feeling like we didn't get anything out of it, that is because we went there looking for it to do something for us instead of going there to praise and bring pleasure to God.

*"These people make a big show of saying the right thing, but their hearts aren't in it. Because they act like they're worshiping me but don't mean it, **Isaiah 29:13 (MSG)***

Interestingly, if we worship God for His benefit, we will feel the benefit from it, too!

How is "living your whole life for God's pleasure" different from the way most people understand "worship"? (responses and discussion)

When a young man falls in love, all he can think about and everything he does is for his sweetheart. When we fall in love with Jesus, like the love-smitten young man, everything we think about and everything we do is for Him and with Him in mind. Whether we are in church, at work, eating dinner with our family, mowing the grass – anything - our whole life becomes a worship to God. Worship is a natural result of being in love with Jesus! (p. 67)

*Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. **Colossians 3:23 (NLT)***

*When you eat or drink or do anything else, always do it to honor God. **1 Corinthians 10:31 (CEV)***

Worship is not a part of your life; it IS your life. (p. 66)

Verse to remember: Psalm 149:4a (TEV)

The Lord takes pleasure in his people.

Additional scriptures

Genesis 6:6

Exodus 20:5

Deuteronomy 32:36

Judges 2:20

1 Kings 10:9

1 Chronicles 16:27

Psalm 2:4,5

Psalm 5:5

Psalm 18:19

Psalm 35:27

Psalm 37:23

Psalm 103:13

Psalm 104:31

Ezekiel 5:13

1 John 4:16

John 4:23

Isaiah 29:13

Psalm 105:4

Psalm 113:3

Psalm 119:147

Psalm 5:3

Psalm 63:6

Psalm 119:62

Psalm 34:1

(Day 9)

SEEING LIFE FROM GOD'S VIEW

We have learned that bringing pleasure to God, or worshipping Him, is our first purpose, but HOW do we know what it takes to please Him?

(responses and discussion; they should answer that God tells us in the Bible)

The Bible tells us that Noah (*Be sure to clarify who Noah was.*) was a man who pleased God, so we can look at his life to see exactly what it was about Him that God found pleasing. Noah was not perfect; he was a human being just like you or me. However, there were five particular ways in which Noah worshipped God that God found very pleasing.

1. Noah loved God. Even when everyone else on earth besides his family had turned their backs on God, Noah loved and had a close relationship with God. Above all else, God desires our love and a relationship with us.

*I don't want your sacrifices – I want your love; I don't want your offerings – I want you to know me, **Hosea 6:6 (LB)***

Because of Noah's love for God and his relationship with God, we are alive today. If it hadn't been for Noah, God would have destroyed all of His creation because He was so distraught with how evil mankind had become. Even if I am the only person on earth who loves God, as Noah was, it is enough to please God and for Him to take care of me.

2. Noah trusted God. God gave Noah a job to do that probably seemed completely ridiculous to him. If anyone had a reason to doubt God, Noah did. God asked him to build a huge ship in the middle of a desert! It was hundreds of miles to the nearest sea, and he had no way to move it there, so what possible use could it be? In addition, Noah had no idea what rain was much less a flood. Up until the time of the flood, the Bible tells us that the earth was watered from the ground up. (Gen. 2:5-6). Noah couldn't even begin to relate to what God was talking about on this one! And if these two issues weren't enough, how in the world was he supposed to round up all those animals from all over the earth and take care of them inside that boat?

However strange all of this may have seemed to Noah, he trusted God so much that he spent more than 120 years of his life following and fulfilling God's instructions. Would you trust God that much?

⁶It's impossible to please God apart from faith. And why? Because anyone who wants to approach God must believe both that he exists and that he cares enough to respond to those who seek him.

*⁷By faith, Noah built a ship in the middle of dry land. He was warned about something he couldn't see, and acted on what he was told. The result? His family was saved. His act of faith drew a sharp line between the evil of the unbelieving world and the rightness of the believing world. As a result, Noah became intimate with God. **Hebrews 11:6-7 9 (MSG)***

Faith grows out of trust and as vs.6 in this passage tells us, we cannot please God without faith.

3. Noah obeyed God. Genesis 6:22 tells us that Noah did everything exactly as God commanded him to do. He didn't pick and choose which things he wanted and didn't want to do; he didn't decide when or if it would be convenient for him to do them; he didn't decide ways that he could do it better or easier; he just did what God asked when God wanted it done exactly how God wanted it done. Delayed obedience or partial obedience is simply disobedience. Noah was completely obedient. And, even though it was impossible for Noah to understand, he obeyed God anyway.

"God doesn't owe us an explanation or reason for everything He asks us to do. Understanding can wait, but obedience can't. Instant obedience will teach us more about God than a lifetime of Bible discussions. In fact, we will never understand some commands until we obey them first. Obedience unlocks understanding! (p. 72) It was only afterwards that Noah understood.

While we cannot earn salvation through our obedience, it is a gift of love through grace, our willingness to obey God is an outward display of our love for Him and an act of worshipping Him.

"If you love me, you will obey what I command." **John 14:15 (NIV)**

4. Noah praised and thanked God. The first thing Noah did when he came off the ark and stepped onto dry land was to find stones to build an altar to offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God. Noah had an attitude of gratitude!

In the same way that we like to be thanked and appreciated when we have done something for someone else, God does, too. We no longer offer animal sacrifices to God because Jesus was the sacrifice that replaced them. Now our sacrifice offering is simply our praise and thanksgiving to God.

Our sacrifice is to keep offering praise to God in the name of Jesus. **Hebrews 13:15 (CEV)**

5. Noah was himself. He did all the things that God made human beings to do. After the flood was over, God told Noah (paraphrase of Genesis 9:1,3) "It's time to get on with your life! Do the things I designed you humans to do. Make love to your spouse. Have babies. Raise families. Plant crops and eat meals. Be humans! This is what I made you to be!"

When we are living in love and obedience to Him, God takes great delight in just watching us be humans and do the ordinary everyday things that He designed us to do.

The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives. **Psalms 37:23 (NLT)**

Because this brings Him pleasure, simply living our lives becomes an act of worship to God.

Just as a parent takes delight in watching her little child sleep, eat, and play, so God takes delight in watching His children. All we have to do is just BE who He created us to be and do what He created us to do. He gave us all the resources the earth has to offer for our enjoyment. He made us with five senses so we could enjoy pleasure, and He delights when we do. He gave each one of us special talents and abilities that He wants us to use. He delights when we do. It is that simple and yet, for us, it seems to be hard.

How do we humans manage to make something difficult out of just being who God made us to be? (responses and discussion. Answers might include that we do not accept ourselves the way God made us; we listen to the world telling us what we should be like or look like; we are looking inward or outward instead of upward; we do not have enough trust in God; we are more concerned with what other people think than with what God thinks; etc.)

Every gift, talent, and pleasure that God has given us is good. However, we can turn any of these into sin by misusing or abusing them. That is when we dishonor and displease God and bring Him sorrow.

Give some examples of how a gift, talent, or pleasure could be turned into something sinful. (Responses and discussion. Answers might include: Not using a gift that God has given you. Using a gift in a way that does not bring glory to God. Taking pleasure to an extreme – too much of a good thing: too much food, too much TV, too much “stuff”. Abusing of pleasure such as sex outside of marriage, pornography, addictions, etc.)

Verse to remember: Psalm 147:11 (CEV)

The Lord is pleased with those who worship him and trust his love.

Our first purpose is to bring pleasure to God which is to worship Him.

Additional scriptures

Ephesians 5:10

Gen. 6:8, 9

Matthew 22:37-38

Genesis 8:20

Hebrews 11:7

Genesis 2:5-6

Psalm 147:11

Psalm 14:2

Genesis 6:22

Psalm 100:2

Psalm 119:33

James 2:24

Psalm 116:17

Psalm 69:30-31

Genesis 9:1, 3

Psalm 68:3

Psalm 33:15

Isaiah 45:9

1 Timothy 6:17

Psalm 103:14

2 Corinthians 5:9

Conclusion

If we don't worship God, we will end up worshipping something else because we were designed for the purpose of worship! It may be ourselves, money, someone we love, but we will worship something.

God wants us to have a relationship with Him like the one He had with Noah. He wants us to love Him, trust Him, obey Him, praise and thank Him, and be who He created us to be so that our lives will be a living and continuous worship to Him in every way. He takes great pleasure in just watching us be the unique human beings that He created each one of us to be in using the gifts and talents He gave us. There is no greater way to worship Him than this.

An interesting thing happens when we fulfill our first purpose which is to live a life of worship – we find real joy!

*The righteous are glad and rejoice in his presence; they are happy and shout for joy. **Psalm 68:3 (TEV)***

Closing the lesson / class:

Close the lesson with a **prayer**

Offer the booklet, "**Am I Saved?**" to any who may want a copy.

Offer **correspondence course packets** to those who desire them.

Let inmates know that **if they desire to be baptized**, they should fill out an inmate request form on which they should indicate that they wish to be baptized by someone from Snellville Church of Christ. Invite them if there is time to stay and talk with you about this after the others leave.

If time permits, teach the song. Read the words together first and make sure the meaning is clear. Sing the first verse for them to hear the tune (or play a recording if available – bring a boom box), then sing together.

References:

¹Warren, Rick. ***The Purpose Driven Life***, Purpose #1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

²Dictionary.com

All scripture references are from <http://www.biblegateway.com/>

Song Lyrics:

Trust and Obey

When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His word
What a glory He sheds on our way.
While we do His good will, He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt nor a fear, not a sigh nor a tear,
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief nor a loss, not a frown nor a cross,
But is blest if we trust and obey.

Bet we never can prove the delights of His love
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favor He shows, and the joy He bestows
Are for those who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet, we will sit at his feet
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;
What he says we will do, where he sends we will go
Never fear, only trust and obey.

Refrain: Trust and obey
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus
Than to trust and obey.