

Campus Church of Christ Jail Ministry
Teacher's Guide
Series 1: Lesson #4
"You Were Planned for God's Pleasure", Part B
(from *The Purpose Driven Life*¹)

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

Preparation:

1. Read the sections for Days 10-12 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.)

- The heart of worship is surrender.
- Fear, pride, and confusion get in the way of our surrender.
- The blessings of surrender include: peace, freedom, God's power in our life.
- God wants to be my best friend.
- We become best friends with God
 - by constant conversation, i.e. prayer.
 - by mediation on His Word.
 - by being completely honest.
 - by choosing to obey in faith.
 - by choosing to value what God values.
 - by making it our highest priority.
- We are as close to God as we choose to be.

"You Were Planned for God's Pleasure", Part B

Introduction

Last week we began to explore what it means to worship God and what exactly worship is. We began by recognizing that God created everything, including us, for His pleasure. We exist because He wanted us and loves us, and He gets great joy from us when we live our lives with the intent to bring honor and glory to Him. We discovered that anything we do that brings pleasure to God is a form of worship or adoration. We learned that there are five ways that we worship that really bring Him pleasure: when we love Him, trust Him, obey Him, praise and thank Him, and simply by being the person that He created us to be. We discussed how worship is not something that we do at church on Sunday, but rather, the way that we live our lives each day that brings God pleasure.

In this lesson, we will be looking further into the concept of worship.

(Day 10)

The Heart of Worship

When I say the word, "surrender", what thoughts come to your mind?

(allow for responses and discussion; the conversation should bring out the negative connotations of the word such as "loser", what someone who has been captured does, etc.)

In our competitive culture, surrender is **not** what we want to do. We want to win, succeed, overcome. We never give up. We go down fighting. Surrender is only what we do when there is absolutely nothing else left to do.

Jesus' life was a model of exactly the opposite. His life was one of surrender and humility. He surrendered His position in heaven to come live on earth because of His love for us. He surrendered His personal desire and will to God's will because of His love for us. Finally, He surrendered Himself to mankind and death at our hands because of His love for us.

Because God through Jesus loved us first and showed us what it means to surrender one's self in love, our surrender to Him is at the very heart of worship. However, this is not surrender due to fear or surrender because there are no other options, it is willing surrender out a heart filled with love and gratitude because He first loved us.

The Apostle Paul described it this way in **Romans 12:1 (TEV)**, *So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us . . . offer yourselves as living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.*

When we talk of surrendering our complete life to Christ, what problems with that idea come to mind? (allow for responses and discussion; segue into the following . . .)

"There are three barriers that block our surrender to God: fear, pride, and confusion." These occur because "we don't realize how much God loves us, we want to control our own lives, and we misunderstand the meaning of surrender." (p. 78)

FEAR

The only way to get rid of our fear is to build our trust in God. The way to build our trust in God is to increase our understanding of just how much He loves us, is interested in us, and cares for us. The following passages express some of the ways that God shows us:

Psalm 145:8-9

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made.

Psalm 139:3

You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways.

Matthew 10:30

And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

1 Timothy 6:17b

. . . in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Psalm 86:5

You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.

And if all of these ways were not enough, Jesus' ultimate expression of love in His sacrificial death ought to be! **Romans 5:8 (NLT)** *But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

God does not exercise His power over us to force us into surrender. He does not take away our free will to choose or not to choose to surrender to Him. He woos and coaxes us because He loves us. What we need to realize is that surrender to God is actually liberation and freedom from the struggle to control our own lives that we can never win.

Pride

As humans, we are full of ourselves. We want to be in control of our own lives. We want to be the god of our own lives. And, "when we try to be our own god,

we end up being more like Satan, who desired the same thing.” (p. 79) Our resistance to God indicates our pride in our own selves. We get irritated, angry and resentful when faced with our own limitations. We want to have it all and do it all. The oldest temptation, PRIDE, is the one Satan used in the Garden of Eden. Until we come to the end of ourselves, we will not be able to humble ourselves and surrender our will to God. After all, He is in control anyway, so we might as well admit it!

Confusion

What does it really mean to surrender to God? When we surrender, we hand the reigns of control over our life to God. We become clay in the Master Potter’s hands and in so doing, He forms us into all that He created us to be that we could never become on our own. What lump of clay ever formed itself into anything?

Surrender means that we follow His leading. We become obedient, even when we don’t understand. We rely on God to work things out instead of trying to manipulate, force, or control the situation.

Jesus gave us an incredible example of what it means to surrender when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was in such agony about what God wanted Him to do that He was sweating drops of blood. Nevertheless, He surrendered His will to God to suffer and then die on a cross in order to become our sin sacrifice. Just like we do, Jesus had a choice – He chose to surrender His will to God.

Benefits of Surrender

Surrender brings us blessings. When we surrender, we can let go of our need to control and be at peace because we know God is in control and we can trust Him to do what is best for us.

Job 22:21 (NLT)

"Stop quarreling with God! If you agree with him, you will have peace at last, and things will go well for you.

When we surrender, we will experience a sense of freedom that we never knew when we were trying to be in control ourselves.

Romans 6:16-19 (MSG)

. . . But offer yourselves to the ways of God and the freedom never quits. . . ¹⁷But thank God you've started listening to a new master, ¹⁸one whose commands set you free to live openly in his freedom!

¹⁹I'm using this freedom language because it's easy to picture. You can readily recall, can't you, how at one time the more you did just what you felt like doing--not caring about others, not caring about God--the worse your life became and the less freedom you had? And how much different is it now as you live in God's freedom, your lives healed and expansive in holiness?

The Choice

We all eventually surrender to something or someone. If we don’t surrender to God, we will surrender to pride, money, lust, fear, addiction or any number of

other things. Surrender to God is the only thing that will keep us away from surrender to everything else. "You are free to choose what you surrender to, but you are not free from the consequences of that choice". (p. 82)

Verse to remember: Romans 6:13b (TEV)

Surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes.

Additional scriptures

1 John 4:9-10, 19	Rom. 12:1	Matthew 10:30
Romans 5:8	Genesis 3:5	Luke 5:5
Psalms 37:7	Matthew 6:22, 24	Mark 14:36
Job 22:21	Joshua 5:13-15	1 Corinthians 15:31
Luke 1:38	James 4:7	Luke 9:23
2 Corinthians 5:9	Philippians 4:13	

(Day 11)

Becoming Best Friends with God

What words come to your mind to describe the relationship between best friends? (responses and discussion)

The Bible describes a very warm and loving friendship between God and Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before they sinned. There was no fear, no guilt, just delight and love between them. God created us to live in his presence, but sin ended that relationship until Christ paid the price so we could once again be friends with God. When Christ died, God ripped the veil in the temple, which symbolized the separation between God and man, wide open from top to bottom as a sign that we once again have direct access to Him.

Romans 5:11 (NLT)

So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God--all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God.

John 15:15 (NIV)

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

2 Corinthians 5:18 (TEV)

All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends.

"Knowing and loving God is our greatest privilege, and being known and loved (by us) is God's greatest pleasure." (p. 87)

It is hard to imagine or understand how or why the Creator of the universe wants to be friends with us. It would be easier to understand a master – servant relationship, a Creator – creature relationship, even a Father – child relationship. But, a best friends kind of relationship? Nevertheless, the Bible tells us that He does and that He is crazy about us!

Exodus 34:14b (NLT)

. . . for he is a God who is passionate about his relationship with you.

When you are really good friends with someone, you talk to them and they talk to you. You share your secrets, worries, fears, and joys. You really know each other because you converse – a lot. The same is true if we want God to be our best friend. We have to be in conversation with Him.

What comes to your mind when you think of talking to God? (responses and discussion)

Prayer

We must constantly talk to God. In **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, we are told to, "pray continually". That simply means that we are talking to God throughout the day about anything and everything. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, whatever is on our mind, we talk to God about it. We can have much more meaningful conversations with God this way than trying to have an occasional long discourse that ends up with our mind wandering. Our goal is to "achieve the reality that God is always present" which is the lifestyle of worship.

Mediation

The conversation cannot be just us talking to God. We must allow God to talk to us, too. **How does God talk to us?** (responses and discussion) This happens through reading and meditating on His Word. We cannot spend 24 /7 reading the Bible, but what we can do is read a passage and then allow it to remain in our thoughts throughout the day by pondering the words for meaning and/or application. The more we meditate on God's Word, the less opportunity there is for tempting thoughts or worry to enter our mind.

Our attitude toward God's Word should become like that expressed in these scriptures:

Job 23:12b (NIV)

. . . I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.

Psalm 119:97 (NIV)

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

Psalm 119:127 (NLV)

I love Your Word more than gold, more than pure gold.

“Prayer lets us speak to God; mediation lets God speak to us. Both are essential to becoming a friend of God.” (p. 91)

Verse to remember: Psalm 25:14 (LB)

Friendship with God is reserved for those who reverence him. With them alone he shares the secrets of his promises.

Additional scriptures

John 13:13

Jude 1:4

Psalm 95:6

Psalm 136:3

1 John 3:1

Psalm 89:26

Isaiah 33:22

Isaiah 47:4

Exodus 33:22,17

2 Chronicles 20:7

Isaiah 41:8

James 2:23

Acts 13:22

Genesis 6:8

Genesis 5:22

Job 29:4

Romans 5:11

2 Corinthians 5:18

2 Corinthians 13:14

1 John 1:3

1 Corinthians 1:9

John 15:15

John 3:29

Exodus 34:14

Acts 17:26-27

Jeremiah 9:24

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Ephesians 4:6

Psalm 23:4

Psalm 143:5

Psalm 145:5

Joshua 1:8

Psalm 1:2

1 Samuel 3:21

Job 23:12

Psalm 119:97

Psalm 77:12

Genesis 18:17

Daniel 2:19

1 Corinthians 2:7-10

Psalm 25:14

(Day 12)

Developing Your Friendship with God

Besides good communication, what other qualities are essential in a close relationship with someone? (allow for response and discussion; answers will vary, but reinforce the ones that correspond to the lesson points on growing your friendship with God.)

In our relationship with God there are four additional qualities that are essential if He is going to be our best friend. The first of these is honesty. While God does not expect perfection from us because that is impossible, He does expect 100% honesty. In other words, we must be completely candid with Him about how we feel and what we think on any and every issue.

Is it ever appropriate to express anger to God? (allow for response and discussion)

In the Bible, we see that the people who God called His friends were open and direct with Him. They were not afraid to express feelings of anger, fear, frustration, abandonment, unfairness, and so on. The Book of Psalms is filled with expressions of every possible emotion as an example to us that God wants us to be real with Him. When we hold back what we feel, we can develop bitterness and resentment and that will ultimately result in our pulling away from God.

The next quality that must be part of a close relationship with God is obedience in faith. "Every time you trust God's wisdom and do whatever He says, even when you don't understand it, you deepen your friendship with God." Jesus was very clear about the connection between obedience and friendship with Him in **John 15:14 (NIV)**. *You are my friends if you do what I command.*

While God wants us to be friends with Him, He has never implied that we are equal with Him, quite the opposite. He is a loving leader, and we must follow. When we understand and appreciate what God, through Jesus, has done for us, we want to do whatever He asks of us out of love and gratitude. When we understand how much He loves us, we will trust Him enough to follow Him anywhere. Jesus taught us how to be obedient by modeling obedience to God himself.

John 15:9-11 (NLT)

"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰When you obey me, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!"

The fifth essential quality for a close relationship with God is to choose to value what God values. Real friends care about what is important to the other person.

They share sorrows and joys, tears and laughter. The more we become God's friend, the more we will care about what concerns Him.

What is it that God cares about the most? (allow for response and discussion)

He wants us all to be saved which is the whole reason for Jesus coming and dying on the cross. So, if we care about what He cares about, we have to be concerned with people being saved. We have to share the Good News of Jesus and God's great love for us.

The last essential quality for a close friendship with God is to desire that friendship more than anything else. In the Psalms, David expresses his passion for God with words like *longing yearning, thirsting, hungering*. (p. 97) The Apostle Paul was also very passionate about his relationship with God and consequently, God used him in a mighty way.

Philippians 3:10 (Amp)

My determined purpose is that I may know Him – that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly.

Verse to remember: James 4:8a (NLT)

Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you.

Additional scriptures

Matthew 11:19	Job. 42:7	Exodus 33:1-17
Psalms 142:2-3	John 15:14	John 15:9-11
1 Samuel 15:22	Matthew 3:17	2 Corinthians 11:2
Psalms 69:9	Psalms 27:4	Psalms 63:3
1 Timothy 6:21	Genesis 32:26	Philippians 3:10
Jeremiah 29:13		

Conclusion

"We are as close to God as we choose to be." (p. 98) If we feel like He is far away, He didn't move, we did. He is always right there waiting for us to invite Him into our lives. To be close to God, however, we must surrender our fear, pride, and confusion to Him. We have to trust His love enough to let go of our

own will and know that whatever God does for us will be done out of love and in our best interest – even if we don't understand. When we surrender, we receive the incredible blessings of peace, freedom, and God's power working in our lives. Doesn't it make more sense to turn control over to Someone who knows everything, can see the future, has all power, has all wisdom, and loves us more than we can ever comprehend?

God wants to be our best friend, but in order for that to happen, we must want it and seek it, too, so much so that it becomes our highest priority. To have an intimate relationship with Him, we must communicate with Him through prayer and mediating on His Word continuously. We have to be completely honest with Him, completely willing to obey His will for us, and willing to make what God values the most what we value the most.

We have only two choices when it comes to God. We can choose to surrender to Him and make Him our best friend, or we can choose to control and direct our own lives and leave Him out of it. Each choice has an eternal consequence. If we include God in our lives now, He will include us in the glory of heaven for all of eternity. If we do not want Him in our life while on earth, He will not want us in His life hereafter and will banish us from His presence into the torment of hell for all of eternity. He lets us decide.

Which choice makes the most sense in your heart and in your mind?

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

Song Lyrics: “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer.
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus know our every weakness:
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise for sake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In His arms He take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.