

VII. A LIFE PURPOSE

When we have received and clearly defined our purpose as from God it will have a dramatic effect on how we live our life day to day. We will be able to rest and enjoy God working through us in a miraculous way. We will experience fruit and joy like we have never known. Our lives will be characterized by peace and contentment. Although having a purpose does not mean a pain free life, one without difficulty or struggle. Quite the contrary, we may experience more trial and difficulties when we walk with God, yet He never leaves us or forsakes us.

A.W. Tozer *Man: The Dwelling Place of God*

“A 20th century prophet” they called in him in his lifetime. As a Chicago and Toronto pastor, as a sought-after conference speaker, and as editor of The Alliance Witness, Dr. Tozer ministered to hundreds of thousands. Since his death in 1963, that ministry has been further multiplied through his writings. He has left a shelf of books that will be mined for their spiritual wealth until the Lord returns.

On Breeding Spotted Mice

The Associated Press lately carried an interesting if somewhat depressing story out of London about a certain British peer who had died just a few days short of his eighty-ninth birthday. Having been a man of means and position, it had presumably not been necessary for him to work for a living like the rest of us, so that at the time of his death he had had about seventy adult years in which he was free to do whatever he wanted to do, to pursue any calling he wished or to work at anything he felt worthy of his considerable abilities. And what had he chosen to do? Well, according to the story, he had “devoted his life to trying to breed the perfect spotted mouse.”

Now, I grant every man the right to breed spotted mice if he wants to and can get the cooperation of the mice, and I freely admit that it is his business and not mine. Not being a mouse lover (nor a mouse hater for that matter; I am just neutral about mice), I do not know but that a spotted mouse might be more useful and make a more affectionate pet than a common mouse-colored mouse. But still I am troubled. The mouse breeder in question was a lord, and I was born on a farm in the hill country of Pennsylvania, but since a cat can look at a king I suppose a farm boy can look at a lord, even look at him with disapproval if the circumstances warrant. Anyway, a man’s a man, and I feel a certain kinship for every man born of woman; so I cannot but grieve for my brother beyond the seas.

Made in the image of God, equipped with awesome powers of mind and soul, called to dream immortal dreams and to think the long thoughts of eternity, he chooses the breeding of a spotted mouse as his reason for existing. Invited to walk with God on earth and to dwell at last with the saints and angels in the world above; called to serve his generation by the will of God, to press with holy

vigor toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, he dedicates his life to the spotted mouse – not just evenings or holidays, mind you, but his entire life.

Surely this is tragedy worthy of the mind of an Aeschylus or a Shakespeare. Let us hope that the story is not true or that the news boys got it mixed up as they sometimes do; but even if the whole thing should prove to be a hoax, still it points up a stark human tragedy that is being enacted before our eyes daily, not by make-believe play actors, but by real men and women who are the characters they portray. These should be concerned with sin and righteousness and judgment; they should be getting ready to die and to live again; but instead they spend their days breeding spotted mice.

If the spiritual view of the world is the correct one, as Christianity boldly asserts that it is, then for every one of us heaven is more important than earth and eternity more important than time. If Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be; if He is what the glorious company of the apostles and the noble army of martyrs declared that He is; if the faith which the holy church throughout all the world does acknowledge is the true faith of God, then no man has any right to dedicate his life to anything that can burn or rust or rot or die. No man has any right to give himself completely to anyone but Christ nor to anything but prayer. The man who does not know where he is lost; the man who does not know why he was born is worse lost; the man who cannot find an object worthy of his true devotion is lost utterly; and by this description the human race is lost, and it is a part of our lostness that we do not know how lost we are. So we use up the few precious years allotted to us breeding spotted mice. Not the kind that scurry and squeak, maybe; but viewed in the light of eternity, are not most of our little human activities almost as meaningless? One of the glories of the Christian gospel is its ability not only to deliver a man from sin but to orient him, to place him on a peak from which he can see yesterday and today in their relation to tomorrow. The truth cleanses his mind so that he can recognize things that matter and see time and space and kings and cabbages in their true perspective. The Spirit-illuminated Christian cannot be cheated. He knows the values of things; he will not bid on a rainbow nor make a down payment on a mirage; he will not, in short, devote his life to spotted mice.

Back of every wasted life is a bad philosophy, an erroneous conception of life's worth and purpose. The man who believes that he was born to get all he can will spend his life trying to get it; and whatever he gets will be but a cage of spotted mice. The man who believes he was created to enjoy fleshly pleasures will devote himself to pleasure seeking; and if by a combination of favorable circumstance he manages to get a lot of fun out of life, his pleasures will all turn to ashes in his mouth at the last. He will find out too late that God made him too noble to be satisfied with those tawdry pleasures he had devoted his life to here under the sun.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the value and importance of having a purpose for our lives?
2. What strikes you as you read Tozer's story?
3. What action steps is God leading you to take?

CBMC

Operation Timothy - Book #4

The Christian Business Men's Committee is an international evangelical organization of Christian business and professional men whose primary purpose is to present Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to other business and professional men and to train these men to carry out the Great Commission.

Steps toward a Purpose Statement:

First you'll need to do some heavy thinking, praying, and writing. Use these questions as a worksheet.

1. **Start from our common purpose as Christians.** Based on our earlier study, what does God desire from us all? Nothing in the rest of your statement can be inconsistent with God's commands, and you won't be successful in other goals if you ignore His purposes.
2. **Who are you?** What is your marital status? Family plan? Occupational status? What special skills are you equipped with? These must all be taken into account?
3. **What are your dreams?** God gives us special vision and aspiration about things we desire to happen. When they are in accordance with His laws, they can be a clue to His will for us.
4. **What are your spiritual gifts, skills, temperament, etc.?**
5. **What impressions are you gaining through prayer?** Don't plan without praying.
6. **What do godly friends say?** Their perspective is essential.

7. Now take the common purpose and integrate with the other questions to begin to write a purpose statement. (Use a legal pad or notebook to begin your rough draft.)

Name

God's universal purpose

Your unique gifts, skills, temperament, etc.

Career goals

Family goals

Personal goals

What Scripture verses has God used in your life to give you direction and purpose? Choose one of these that best characterizes God's purpose for your life.

Be patient: this may take several times of rewriting over a period of time to refine and polish. Discuss this with some close personal friends. Talk to someone who has done this. Ask them to share their personal statement with you and share how they arrived at it. Sign your name at the bottom of your statement. (If married, this should be done together.)

“A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul...” Proverbs 13:19

The following are samples of purpose statements from two different couples to give you some idea of how yours might look. Try to write your own in light of the specific gifts and unique calling God has entrusted to you. Remember these were developed over a period of time, re-evaluated periodically, refined and updated. So, just start simply.

If you need more in-depth guidance, Gordon Adams' *Establishing Your Purpose* gives detailed instructions and help in preparing a life purpose statement. Write or call:

Vision Foundation
8901 Strafford Circle
Knoxville, TN 37923
(615) 690-4603

Remember that these are the finished products of a process that took many tries and years to refine. Your first attempt may be a lot simpler than these, but you can continue to work on yours as you grow and learn more. So, don't get discouraged!

LIFE PURPOSE STATEMENT

Life Purpose Verses

I Thessalonians 2:8

"So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."

II Corinthians 12:15

"And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved."

1. To devote my life, to and with my wife (as one), to see that every immediate member of our family becomes a godly Christian. This includes our sons-in-law, their wives (our daughters), grandchildren and grandchildren's children. We will spend time with them as a group and individually in the activities that promote godliness, spending our energy and resources as needed for the accomplishment of this.
2. Our home is given to us by God and shall always be available to Him for everything He wished to use it for.
3. All our earthly resources belong to God and are available to Him. We are stewards (managers) to utilize these resources as we are directed by God. We will give the tithe regularly as a minimum. The major purpose of the accumulation of our money and resources is to continue our goals after we have gone to Heaven.
4. As much as is possible, we will direct our everyday work and play activities toward the CBMC purpose which we have been called to, and which we feel is synonymous with the Great Commission. Matthew 28:19, 20.
5. We will seize every opportunity presented to us to share Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Lord and answer for the sin of individual man. We depend upon the Holy Spirit for our direction in these matters as we understand that this battle for people's souls is supernatural.
6. We are committed to the training of a few people personally as disciplemakers and leaders. Understanding that this takes a tremendous amount of energy and time, we plan 2-8 years with individual people that God entrusts to us.
7. We remain open to the Lord for every new learning experience. We desire to grow spiritually and realize that God keeps us in a training program. It is our desire to be in this learning program until we are promoted to Heaven and our eternal promises.
8. We are learning to establish goals for each category stated and want the Lord to hold us accountable for setting and maintaining this LIFE PURPOSE statement. Each of these statements should be broken into segments reflecting both short-range and long-range goals. These should be checked monthly, noted for progress quarterly and updated for accuracy and accomplishment year. We will schedule regular time on a calendar for planning and prayer.