

## TOTAL REVOLUTION of PURPOSE

### Revolutionary Purpose #1 – Created for God's Pleasure

**Intro:** What is our purpose? Why are we here on earth? Philosophers can't agree, but the Bible gives a very strong answer to this question – and surprising as it might be, “to be happy” doesn't top the list!

**Session Objective:** The objective of this session is the transformation of the student's thinking in terms of their purpose – the juxtaposition of the two ideas: To be happy, vs. to bring pleasure to God. This objective will begin to set the stage for the following sessions. You will also note that our primary scripture passage has nuances of “The fruits of the Spirit” from our “Revolution of Values” series. Making reference back to prior sessions can reinforce learning experiences and ties the learning together for students.

**Minimum Prep:** Read through the entire session, including the suggested teaching materials and close your time together with group prayer.

**Extended Prep:** Read the portion in “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren entitled “You were planned for God's pleasure” and prepare for a time of worship and prayer following the session.

### Session Outline

#### Scripture:

*“For you were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:8-10)*

Ephesians 5:10 (the message): *“figure out what pleases God and do it”*

#### Small Group Questions:

- 1. Share with each other some of your “life-goals”. What is something you would like to accomplish by the time you retire – you can share something small or something large?**

**Leader Note:** You can begin this sharing time by sharing yourself. Share about a small goal that you have – “I want to visit Australia before I am 40”, or “when my children are old enough I want to risk my life by jumping out of an airplane”.

Feel free to share a small goal like that to encourage the students to begin sharing with you and one another their goals.

- 2. What do you think are some of God's goals and purposes in his life? What do you think are some things that he would like to "accomplish"? Make a list for discussion.**

**Leader Note:** Have a white board, overhead or butcher paper available to write down the many ideas that the students generate. They may have never thought of this question before. For an added challenge you can follow up each answer with, "can you think of a place in the Bible that verifies that idea?" This makes the answers far more "Weightier" than my ideas or your ideas about God's purposes.

- 3. How does the scripture passage we read today strike you? Particularly, the paraphrase, "figure out what pleases God and do it."?**
- 4. How does this simple sentence help you to understand your purpose in life? What is the assumed purpose of your life from that statement?**

**Leader Note:** The assumed purpose is of course – please God. This leads us into a discussion about our purpose in life. There are some great ideas that you can use from the book "The Purpose Driven Life" in this following section.

**Leader Say:** *There is an old Native American fable about a young brave who came across a nest of eagle eggs. Mischievous as this young brave was, he took one of the eagle's eggs and placed it in the nest of some prairie chickens.*

*The egg hatched, and the young eagle grew up with the brood of prairie chickens. All his life the misplaced eagle, thinking he was a prairie chicken, did what chickens did. He scratched in the dirt for seeds and insects. He clucked and cackled. He flew, with a brief thrash of wings and flurry of feathers, no more than a few feet off the ground. After all, that's how prairie chickens fly.*

*Years passed and the misplaced eagle grew into an adult.*

*One day, he saw a magnificent bird far above him in the cloudless sky. Hanging with graceful majesty on the powerful wind currents, it soared with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings.*

*"What a beautiful bird!" said the misplaced eagle to his older brother: "What is it?" "That's an eagle – the chief of the birds, no other bird can compare to him," the brother clucked.*

*“But don’t give it a second thought. You could never be like him.”*

*So the misplaced eagle never gave it another thought, and died thinking it was a prairie chicken.*

### **5. What do you think is the moral of this story?**

**Leader Say:** *In North America, researchers have asked parents, “What is the one thing you wish for your children?” The overwhelming majority of parents answer, “for them to be happy.” The result of this desire, is that parents all across Canada are bringing up children who believe that their purpose in life, truly is to simply be “happy”*

### **6. How do you think the goal of many parents for their children “to be happy” is actually a lot like the parable we have just read?**

**Leader Note:** If you are teaching in a larger group – like a Bible Study or a youth group meeting, the following material can help you to summarize our session together. If you are a small group leader, read over this information before your small group meeting, and then simply use whatever you feel most comfortable using. Resist the urge to simply read the following words out loud to your students!

#### **Follow up this question with this teaching:**

In Revelation 4:11 we read, “You created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created.” This passage tells us pretty much without room for argument that God created everything – and that his purpose in creation was to bring him pleasure. In another place in the Bible God says, “It is not for your sake that I am going to do these things”, God said, “but for the sake of my holy name.” And in Psalm 149:4 we read “The Lord takes pleasure in his people.”

What is clear is that we were not created for the express purpose of being happy. Now that doesn’t mean we were created to be miserable either, it just means that entire line of thinking is mis-construed. The Bible tells us pretty clearly that you and I were created for God’s enjoyment. That is quite a high purpose. Does God enjoy it when we are happy? Certainly if our happiness is holy! But more importantly, we discover that what God enjoys is for us to be living in close relationship with Him! Our purpose is a Royal purpose in that our purpose is to live a life that brings God pleasure.

Think about this for a minute. Our purpose is not to be good people, or to do lots of good things...but to bring pleasure to God. Is this selfish on God’s part?

Consider for a moment this question. Yes, it could be very selfish on God’s part if his enjoyment came at “our expense”, but when we study scripture we discover that his enjoyment even comes at His expense. Like a loving parent, God

delights in his children. You bring him joy! He has made unbelievable sacrifices for you and I.

We walked away from a relationship with God, but he didn't abandon us. Instead through Jesus' death on the cross God extends to us grace –which is a gift we could never earn, nor deserve to have, but is given to us nonetheless. God gives us grace so that we can as broken and sinful people come into his presence. Why? Because your presence brings pleasure to God!

So in Ephesians 5:10 we read, “figure out what brings God pleasure, and do it!” A complete Revolution of our world thinks. Likely your friends at school live with the idea, “figure out what brings me pleasure, and on the whole doesn't hurt other people, and do that.” But the Revolutionary follower of Jesus lives a completely different life. They ask – What would make Jesus smile today? And their purpose is set!

Even in Christianity this is pretty radical teaching. I have heard many teachers lately say, “find out what you must do to gain God's blessing and do it.” What is the purpose of our actions in this goal? God's pleasure or our happiness? This statement is a 180-degree turn in attitude from “Find out what pleases God and do it”. When we please God, will God bring blessings? Most definitely! Not always blessings the way the world calculates blessings, but we will be people of blessing. But if we simply do what is required to gain God's blessings, it seems to me that God is no more than a genie in a bottle – find out how many times you need to rub the bottle, and a genie will emerge to grant you your every wish. Notice that in this analogy, the genie calls the one doing the rubbing “master”...while those who are Jesus followers call Jesus “master”.

**(Leader you can tell this story about my life or insert an alternate illustration):** Darren DeGraaf who is the Director of Youth Ministries for our denomination talks about his mentor – a man named Mel. In their times together, Mel would always challenge Darren, “Darren, when you wake up tomorrow morning, before you get out of bed simply say to Jesus, ‘Master Jesus, this is your servant Darren reporting for duty...guide me and lead me today.’” The result of such a small but powerful prayer is that we live out our lives seeking to do God's will, and our purpose for our day – not just our lives, but our day, is set by the God of the universe. In Darren's life he discovered that he is very likely to see himself as a servant, but has struggled to see himself as a “son”. To resolve this, Darren has substituted the word “Servant” to “Son” so that he also sometimes prays, “Father God, this is your son Darren, coming into your presence...guide me and lead me today.” Do you see the difference this prayer can make in someone's life? Imagine with me what would happen, if each one of us prayed a prayer like that each morning, and again throughout the day and days of our lives. What would happen if we prayed that prayer, and then responded to the nudges of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Would our lives bring pleasure to God?

**Leader Note:** One of the greatest ways we can bring pleasure to God is to acknowledge who he is through worship. We all know that worship is not just about music, or singing, or prayer, but singing songs of praise to God, and praying prayers of worship, adoration and praise are an important part of worship.

**For extended prep:** Move from this session into a time of worship and prayer with your students. If you have musical talent, have them lead in songs of worship, if you don't, your local Christian bookstore (or internet store) can provide you with worship CD's that are designed to "Sing along". Spend some time as a group – no matter how big or small, worshipping through music. Then go into a time of prayer – praise God for who He is, worship Him and adore Him. In your prayer, acknowledge the grand purpose that he designed you and students of your group for, and praise him for that!

Another idea is "popcorn praise". Rather than using music for worship at this point, simply open up a time of popcorn praise, as a prayer, or as a response, where students simply speak up a sentence of praise to God – as they are lead. As a leader, start off, and interject along the way with your own sentences of praise.

### Comments and Feedback

**Leader Note:** This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

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