

You Are Here for a Purpose

In recent months, I have spent a lot of time meditating on and praying about the meaning and the mystery of life. None of us asked to be born or created, yet with every fiber of our being, we want to live. And most of us have a strong desire to reproduce as well—to bring children into the world. But why? Why are we here? What is our purpose? And why are we so eager to bring the next generation into this fallen world? To what end?

The older we get, the more natural it is to reflect on questions like these, especially on a personal level: What was the purpose of *my* life? Why am *I* here? Does *my* life make sense in the light of eternity?

Shortly before he was martyred, Paul wrote, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7, NIV).

He knew he had a divine assignment and that he was here on a sacred mission. And he was able to look back and say, “I have completed the task the Lord has given to me.”

He was not simply living to survive. His purpose on earth was not simply to enjoy comfort and get rich. Instead, he was here to do the will of God, to glorify the Lord whether by life or by death. Everything else was secondary to that.

But this was not unique to Paul. It is God Himself who put each of us here, and He put us here for a purpose.

That’s why every single one of us will stand before God one day and give account of our lives (see Rom. 14:12, 2 Cor. 5:10).

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That's why Paul could exhort his readers to run their race so as to win (see 1 Cor. 9:24-27).

That's why Jesus could teach parables about servants giving account to their masters (see Matt. 25:14-30).

That's why, deep down, most of us want to make a difference while we are here. We want to fix things that are wrong. We want to help others in need. We want our kids to grow up in a better world.

That's the divine nature working inside of us, even if the image of God has been corrupted by sin in those who do not know the Lord.

That's the Holy Spirit working within the hearts of believers, as the concerns of the Lord become our concerns and the standards of the Lord become our standards.

That's why we want to share our faith, to shine God's light in dark places, to make Jesus known, to correct errors and to right wrongs. In a deep spiritual sense, it is in our very blood.

Many philosophers and theologians believe that this sense of purpose and destiny points clearly to the existence of God, without whom life would have no real meaning. After all, how can a random, unguided, even ruthless evolutionary process result in meaning and purpose and destiny?

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That's why animals simply reproduce without any sense of destiny or purpose. That's why a pet doesn't reflect on having a meaningful life. Such concepts are foreign to the animal world.

But they are not foreign to us. That's why it is so crucial for each of us to find out why we are here. What is *my* mission? What is *my* assignment? Why did the Lord put me on this earth? And to what eternal purpose did Jesus shed His blood for me and redeem me? (The Scriptures state that we were bought with a price and are not our own; see 1 Cor. 6:20).

Nate Saint was one of the five courageous missionaries who were martyred by the Waorani tribe in Ecuador in 1956. (Their inspirational story was told in an old documentary titled "Through Gates of Splendor.")

Saint was only 32 when he died, but he had already counted the cost before that fateful day, writing, "People who do not know the Lord ask why in the world we waste our lives as missionaries. They forget they too are expending their lives and when the bubble has burst they will have nothing of eternal significance to show for the years they have wasted."

Do these words speak to you today? Could it be that you are so caught up in the rat race of life or so distracted by the things of this world, from sports to entertainment and from personal vanity to the accumulation of wealth, that you have lost sight of the very purpose of life?

Jim Elliot, one of Nate Saint's colleagues, was only 28 when he was killed. While in college he journaled these words: "God, I pray Thee, light these idle sticks of my life and may I burn for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life, but a full one, like you, Lord Jesus."

May we live full lives too! And may each of us embrace and live out this prayer: "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12).

May *you* live your life with purpose, and may you run your race so as to win.

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