



Study Guide #1: Man's Purpose in Life

Why Am I Here?

Have you ever contemplated that question? I mean giving it more than just a brief moment of thought. Have you actually sat down and considered to purpose of your life? Why are you here on planet Earth? What is the ultimate goal of your existence? I know, it's a deep question that can make your brain literally hurt. However, I do believe there is a very simple answer.

I remember well, as I was in the thick of my addiction to porn, lust and masturbation, that this question plagued me. I kept feeling like there had to be more to this life than working a job, working around the house, trying to keep my marriage and family together, and trying my best not to give in, yet again, to the pull of lust.

Man's Opinion of the Purpose of Life ...

So, I did some research on what others, the movers and shakers of our time - the men and women who influence society, say the purpose of life is. Here is just a sample of what people are saying:

- *"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."* ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson
- *"All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom."* ~ Albert Einstein
- *"The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better."* ~ Robert F. Kennedy
- *"The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the uttermost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experiences."* ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

QUESTION: What is fundamentally wrong with these comments on our purpose in life?

QUESTION: Why is it so important to have a purpose to life?

QUESTION: What is life like for the one without a right purpose?

What is My Purpose in Life?

The object of a football game is to score a touchdown (or field goal) and to keep the other team from doing the same. Those football players have a very good understanding as to why they are on that field. They understand what their purpose is, and they know what they need to do to fulfill that purpose.

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The object of a basketball game is to get the ball into the basket while preventing the other team from doing the same thing. Every basketball player knows this, and therefore he plays the game with a sense of direction, purpose and an end goal in mind. If he didn't, he would be wandering aimlessly around the court, getting in everyone's way.

Things are made for a purpose. The person who makes something (the maker) knows why he is making it. He has a plan and a goal for it. For example, why does a cook make a sandwich? Why does a carpenter build a book shelf? Why does a mother knit a sweater?

QUESTION: Read the following verses and answer the question - What do these verses tell us about God? Genesis 1:26; Psalm 95:6; 100:3; 139:14; Isaiah 54:5 and John 1:3

QUESTION: Why is this so significant?

God's Opinion of the Purpose of Life ...

Did God have a reason for making the stars? The birds and the fish? Did God have a reason for making you?

God knows exactly what He's doing, and He never makes a mistake. You have been created for a reason and a purpose. But until you discover what it is and daily live out that purpose, you will be always seeking, never able to find fulfillment, meaning and satisfaction to your life. You will experience discontentment and unhappiness. You will find yourself always looking for more, looking for something to fill the void. Nor will you be able to positively impact the lives of your family and friends around you.

For quite some time I was on a quest. I thought that pornography and masturbation would fill my emptiness. I believed that building a fantasy world of pleasure was what I needed. I was ever on the prowl, looking for that image, that video, that girl at the beach, something that would finally quench my thirst and fulfill my perceived needs. Ever looking - never finding.

QUESTION: Read Ecclesiastes 1:13, 16-17 and 2:1-10. Make a list of the things Solomon chased after.

QUESTION: Read Ecclesiastes 1:14; 2:11, 17. What did Solomon liken those things to and why?

Think about what Solomon said. First, everything was "meaningless" - in other words, it left him unsatisfied. Have you ever felt that way? Let's be specific: has porn left you unsatisfied? If you're like me, you pursued lust, porn and masturbation because somehow you believed it would satisfy you. You thought it would fill a gap or meet a need. So how's that going for you? Not very well, right? We might experience a temporary "fix" or "high" which gives us the impression of feeling good, but soon afterward our lows are lower and our hunger for more is growing.

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Solomon also said it's like "chasing the wind." Picture yourself standing outside on a chilly, Fall morning. As you look around, you take in a deep breath, holding it for a moment you finally exhale. Because of the coldness of the air, you can "see" your breath hanging in front of you. As it begins to waft away, you try to reach out and grab it. What happens? Absolutely nothing. You were chasing after the wind. When we pursue sexual pleasure as a means of finding satisfaction and fulfillment, it's like we are chasing after the wind. It's elusive. It's there for a brief moment and then vanishes away, and you will never actually grab hold of it.

Next, Solomon said that there was "nothing gained" from his search. In other words, there was no profit, there was no lasting value. Why not? Ultimately the things of this earth will never satisfy, they will never quench our thirst for more. Porn, masturbation and lust will always leave you unfulfilled and desirous for more.

QUESTION: Do you realize what it is we are really searching for? What is the only thing that will truly satisfy and meet our every need? (hint: who loves you more than anything, so much so that He died for you ... and who has a wonderful plan for your life?)

Finally, Solomon said that all those things he pursued in life he "hated" and were "grievous" to him. Literally he was saying that they stunk of death and caused him nothing but stress. My friend, do you realize that your pursuit of satisfaction through lust and pornography and masturbation reeks of death and causes you nothing but stress? Is it worth it?

QUESTION: Why was Solomon's search for purpose and meaning to life unsuccessful?

QUESTION: Summarize - Where was Solomon looking?

QUESTION: Why did he choose to look there (what was he really searching for)?

QUESTION: Why couldn't people and things meet his real need?

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QUESTION: What should we be looking for, and where should we be looking for it (read Proverbs 2:1-5; 8:17; Psalm 25:4-5 and 119:34-37)?

QUESTION: Why don't we search for and pursue what we know will truly satisfy, fulfill and give meaning and purpose to our life?

Satisfaction Guaranteed ... Really?

Look again at that list of the things Solomon chased after. Those things (money, possessions, relationships, pleasures) couldn't satisfy. No matter how hard he tried - no matter how much he put in the bank, how many things he accumulated, how many friends he made, or how many different types of pleasures he experienced - he just couldn't find the true meaning to life because he was looking for it in all the wrong places.

QUESTION: Where do *you* typically go, and what do you usually do to try to find purpose and meaning to your life?

QUESTION: Why are "things" (e.g., porn, masturbation etc.) unable to provide us with that sense of true meaning and purpose?

QUESTION: Why then do we tend to gravitate toward those "things"?

That truth hit me hard between the eyes. I was giving in to my sexual addiction because I "thought" that it would satisfy. Somehow I believed that it could make me happy, fill in the void in my life, make up for what I was missing in my marriage. Yet, no matter how many images I looked at, no matter how many women I lusted over, no matter how many times I masturbated, I was always left unhappy, unsatisfied, unfulfilled, and wracked with guilt. Can you relate?

QUESTION: As Solomon looked over his life and the decisions he made, what was his final conclusion (Ecclesiastes 12:13)?

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QUESTION: Why would he come to this conclusion?

Solomon's conclusion is just as true for us today as it was for him. We were created for one purpose, and until we live out that purpose in our daily lives, we will continue to come up empty-handed in our quest.

QUESTION: To what end were you created (read Isaiah 43:7 cp. 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:7) - what is the Maker's purpose for your existence?

QUESTION: What exactly does that mean?

QUESTION: How do we accomplish this goal (1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17, 1 Peter 4:11)?

King David wrote in Psalm 112:1 that the man who fears the Lord and delights in his commands (Scripture) is blessed of God. In other words, when you are doing all that God created you to do, you are truly happy. The bottom-line in my life was that I was living for King Me. Self was sitting high on the throne of my heart and I was miserable. I was pursuing everything but God in my life. I had become my own "god," and everything I was doing was to provide King Me pleasure, satisfaction and fulfillment. Guess what, it didn't work - because it's not supposed to work that way.

QUESTION: Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13; 1 Samuel 15:22; Proverbs 21:3 and Mark 12:29-31 – In your own words, what is God's desire for you?

QUESTION: Do you truly want to live a life that consistently glorifies God?

Simply wanting something isn't going to make it happen. For example, if a guy wants to lose 20 pounds, the only way that's going to happen is if he changes his daily life habits and consistently adheres to a specific diet and exercise program.

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In the same way, if we want to be godly men, we must make some spiritual lifestyle changes and adhere to a specific diet of daily feeding on God's word and walking in obedience to it.

QUESTION: What are you doing *right now* to achieve the goal of purity and godliness in your own life?

When we walk in humble obedience to God, bringing glory to our Father, Savior and Friend - as we were created to do - we are fulfilling our purpose and that is when we will find lasting joy, peace and real meaning to life!

Let me emphasize this point. What are you doing right now, every moment of every day, to achieve the goal of purity & godliness? What plan of action do you have in place to pursue your true purpose in life? You see my friend; simply wanting it won't make it happen! To be a pure man you must have a plan and actually put it into motion.

QUESTION: In and of yourself, you are incapable of being godly. Where must you go to find what you need to become pure and godly (2 Peter 1:3; Psalm 119:130, 160; Jeremiah 15:16)?

Wow! Did you catch that? God provides *everything* we need to live a godly life through our knowledge of Him (2 Peter 1:3)! You and I cannot manufacture godliness on our own (Job 14:4) - God knows we've tried. In and of ourselves we are incapable of being godly. We just don't have it in us (Psalm 14:3; 53:3; Romans 3:10-12; Isaiah 53:6; 64:6 and Ecclesiastes 7:20).

The only way we can live a life that glorifies God, is if God Himself - who has that power naturally - comes to dwell within us. Then, as we learn to yield to Him, **His godliness** is lived through us! So understand that purity and godliness is NOT you doing or being something. Godliness is God living through you. It is God becoming greater as you become less (John 3:30).

QUESTION: Read 2 Peter 1:3 again. What is the instrument God uses to lead us toward purity and godliness?

QUESTION: Read Titus 1:1. Where do we find this truth (see John 17:7)?

QUESTION: Read 1 Timothy 6:11. What does it mean to "pursue" godliness? How does a guy do that?

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QUESTION: God has provided you with “*everything you need*” in order to be godly. What does that mean?

Just stop to think about this for a moment. God's divine power has given you *everything* you need. "Everything" refers to each and every part of the whole, leaving absolutely nothing out. God's divine power has given you ALL you need to be a pure, godly man. You don't have to go looking anywhere else for it. You won't find what you need in a book (other than the Bible), you won't find it in an x#-step program, you won't find it in white-knuckling through the temptations. God is the only source, and He has already given you everything you need to know victory over lust, porn, and masturbation!

QUESTION: How does Galatians 3:1-3 apply?

Could you save yourself for eternity? Can you earn a place in Heaven by living a good life (Isaiah 64:6; Galatians 2:16)? No! It is only by faith in Christ that you are saved (Ephesians 2:8-9). You needed God's power, God's love, and God's forgiveness. Do you really believe that to gain victory over an addiction to porn you have to figure it out on your own?

QUESTION: Understanding that you need God's divine power to fight this three-headed dragon of lust, porn and masturbation, where do you go to learn how to fight (and win) this battle (2 Peter 1:3)? Where do we go to gain a deeper understanding of God?

QUESTION: How often do you study (not just read) your Bible? Why?

QUESTION: Read Isaiah 48:17. Are you listening, truly listening to the Teacher? Are you following His directions?

QUESTION: Read Psalm 119:105. What is this verse saying? Do you believe it with all your heart? What are you doing about it?

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QUESTION: Read Joshua 1:7. Are you careful (taking great pains) to obey all of God's Word?

QUESTION: Are you obeying everything God wants you to do, or do you tend to pick and choose which parts of Scripture you are going to apply to your life?

Please read Psalm 19:7-11, Proverbs 6:23 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Jesus said, "*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4). If you are going to be serious about living a life that glorifies God - a life that fulfills the purpose to which you were created - you need to roll up your sleeves, grab your shovel and pick axe, and begin digging into the Word of God.

It is through Scripture that you will find your answers and your strength (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12). The Bible is the solid foundation upon which we must build pure, godly lives (Matthew 7:24-27).

My friend, God has given you a new mind, a new nature, and a new heart. You are fully equipped to live a pure, godly Christian life. I submit that in order for that to become a reality, in order to know real victory over lust, porn and masturbation, in order to find true meaning and purpose to your life, you need to quit trying to live the Christian life. Quit trying to be a pure man. You can't do it in your own power.

Only as we are yielded to and reliant upon the working of the Holy Spirit in our life - as He uses the Word of God to guide us - will we become pure, godly men whose lives truly glorify our Lord!

QUESTION: From this study, what primary truth stood out to you?

QUESTION: What are you going to do in response to that truth (answer with "I am going to _____")? Share this answer with another person and ask them to hold you accountable.