



# IDENTITY – WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?

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31 July 2022

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## Introduction

We are continuing on our journey in our new series Church Alive. **We're trusting that each one of us will awakened in our God-given gifts and callings in a fresh way and begin to serve one another and make a difference in this city.** This is our fourth message on the theme of Identity.

## Our purpose on earth

Today we are going to answer five questions about our destiny and purpose.

### 1. The Question of Identity – **“Who am I?”**

Suppose someone asks you: **“So, tell me who you are.”**

You start to tell the person what you do for a living, but the person **stops you and says, “No, don't tell me about your job – tell me who you are.”**

A little confused, you begin to share with the person that you are a parent, a spouse, a resident of the city in which you live, but the person stops you again and says, **“No, don't tell me about the roles you play in life. I am really interested to know who you are.”**

Allow me to read some verses of Scripture to help answer this question explaining who you **are...**

Genesis 1:26a ESV *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...*

Genesis 1:27 ESV *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

Romans 8:29a ESV *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son....*

Ephesians 1:4-5 ESV *even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will...*

Ephesians 2:10 ESV *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

From our texts above we learn that our primary identity is as an image bearer of God who created us. **I am God's child created in His image and likeness.**

Since that original image was marred in the Fall, and we have been redeemed in Jesus Christ, we are in the process of being shaped in His image **by God's Spirit.** Our identity is in Christ, whose image we bear as a witness to the world. As we live out that identity, we will live in ways that reflect that image.

**Here's the challenge. We live in a world that** labels us and defines us more by what we do than who we are - defining who we are in the roles we play, the titles we hold, and the outcomes we produce. But for a child of God, the process is exactly the opposite. If there is success to be had in this world, it comes solely from the extent to which we have submitted ourselves to Jesus Christ, allowing Him to live in us and through us.

As the Holy Spirit conforms our spirit in the image of Christ, then excellent, effective, and life-changing work (called **"good"**) flows from us. But that work never defines us. We are children of God, redeemed through Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, period.

## 2. The Question of Existence: Why am I alive?

Jeremiah asked this question thousands of years ago. Jeremiah 20:18 GNB *"Why was I born? Was it only to have trouble and sorrow, to end my life in disgrace?"*

There have probably been times in your life when you felt that way, too.

Why does God want us here? Why are we alive? Why are we on this planet? Is there a reason?

The Bible says in Proverbs 16:4 NKJV *"The LORD has made all for Himself..."(for His own purpose)*

It is for His purpose. God has never made anything without a purpose. Every rock has a purpose, every plant has a purpose, every animal has a purpose, and you have a purpose.

Look at God's motive...

Ephesians 1:4 MSG *"Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love".*

You were created to be loved by God. God is love and God wanted to create someone to love and so He created you. He did not need you. He was not lonely. He wanted you. He made you to love you. That is why you are on the earth - to be loved by God.

## 3. **The Question of Significance: "Does my life matter?"**

Isaiah 49:4 NLT *I replied, "But my work seems so useless! I have spent my strength for nothing and to no purpose. Yet I leave it all in the LORD's hand; I will trust God for my reward."*

You were made for meaning, and if you don't have a meaning and purpose in your life and you do not know why God put you on this planet, life does not make sense.

During World War II, there were prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp in Hungary that were processing human sewage in a factory. The allies came along, bombed that factory, and blew it apart. So, the prisoners had nothing to do. The Nazi soldiers had the prisoners take all the rubble of that factory and move it to another field. The next day, they had them take that same rubble and move it back in reverse. The next day, they had to take that stuff and move it back and day after day they had no meaning, no purpose. It was just work doing the same thing over and over with no meaning and no purpose. Then something strange began to happen. The prisoners began to go crazy. They began to lose their will to live because there was no meaning, no purpose in their work. They were just moving bricks back and forth, back and forth. Many of them began to throw themselves in front of the guards trying to get shot. In essence, trying to commit suicide. Because you and I were made for meaning.

You are going through life living at one of three levels:

1. The Survival Level. You are just barely getting by. You are just existing. You are not living. You are controlled by your circumstances.
2. The Success Level. You have a comfortable living in comparison to the rest of the world. You have possessions, you have freedom, you have good health, you may have prestige and you may be quite successful. But you may be saying: "If I am so successful, why don't I feel fulfilled?" The reason is that it takes more than success and status to satisfy.
3. The Significance Level. You get there through three things:
  - a. You know the meaning of life.
  - b. You know how much you matter to God.
  - c. **You know God's purposes for your life, and you are living them out.**

If you want to know how much you matter to God, look at the next couple of verses from the Bible:

Isaiah 44:2 CEV *I am your Creator. You were in my care even before you were born...*

Psalms 139:16 NLT *You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

Psalms 33:11 GNB *But his plans endure forever; his purposes last eternally.*

**God says, "I have plans and purposes for your life, but they do not end at death."**

You were made to last forever. One of the biggest ways you can waste your life is thinking all there is, is here and now. You are going to spend far more time on other side of death, than you do on this side.

You were made for eternity and life is preparation for eternity.

**God's purposes for you are eternal. They are forever. This is the key to the meaning of life - realising that life is preparation for eternity.**

2 Corinthians 5:1 ESV *For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

#### 4. The Question of **Intention: "What is my purpose? What on earth am I here for?"**

Probably the greatest, atheist philosopher of the last century, Bertrand Russell, an Englishman said, "Unless you assume the existence of God, the question of life's meaning, and purpose is irrelevant."

If there is no God, if you are just a chance of nature – your life does not matter. But there is a God. And God made you for a reason, and He made you for a purpose. The only way you are going to know your purpose is to know Him.

You were made by God and for God – and until you understand that, life will never make sense!

**If you do not know something's purpose**, it is likely to be abused. Do you want to know why there are so many abused people today? Because we do not know our purpose.

The only way you are going to know what the purpose of something is and how it should function:

1. You talk to the creator, or the inventor of it, or
2. You read the owner's manual.

**You must talk to the Creator and look in the owner's manual. It's the only way you will ever know your purpose in life.**

You find your purpose by getting to know God. It all starts with God.

Colossians 1:16-17 ESV *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

**If you are going to get to know God's purpose for your life, you must get to know God. It is just that simple. Understanding God's purposes for your life takes time.** We all are at different stages in our spiritual journey.

Our CHURCH ALIVE series is designed to help you on your journey of discovery and growth.

We have a Primary Purpose: To participate in God's Mission to bring Heaven's Kingdom to Earth.

We have Secondary Purpose: To find the specific assignment God has for each one of us.

We were put on earth for 5 Primary Purposes:

1. I was planned for God's pleasure. The Bible word for that is "worship." To know and love God.
2. I was formed for God's family. The Bible word for that is "fellowship." To learn to love each other.
3. I was created to become like Christ. The Bible word for that is "discipleship." To learn to become like Christ.
4. I was shaped to serve God. The Bible word for that is "ministry." To learn to use my resources, talents, and gifts for God in serving Him.
5. I was made for a mission. The Bible word for that is "evangelism." To be a witness of the saving power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. **The Question of Empowerment: "How will I be able to do what God has designed and called me to do?"**

- I need God's Permission, Authority and Backing.
- I need God's Power and Ability.
- I need God's Provision and Resources.

Genesis 1:28 ESV *And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Luke 24:46-49 ESV *and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, (47) and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (48) You are witnesses of these things. (49) And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."*

Acts 1:8 ESV *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Ephesians 1:19-23 NLT *I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power (20) that raised Christ from the dead and seated him **in the place of honour at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.** (21) **Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.** (22) God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. (23) And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.*

Ephesians 1:3 ESV *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,*

1 Peter 4:10 NLT *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*

- You have been blessed to be fruitful – you have provision from God.
- You have been authorized and commissioned to do what God has called you to do.
- **You have been empowered by God's Holy Spirit to do what He has authorized you to do.**

### Is there a difference between Power and Authority?

DUNAMIS, translated as POWER is the strength and ability to do something.

EXOUSIA, translated as AUTHORITY is the right or permission to do something.

By being baptised by the Holy Spirit we have been given supernatural POWER and ability to do what God has called and purposed us to do.

By being created and commissioned to do what God has purposed for us to do, He has given us the necessary AUTHORITY to use His POWER to do what He has called us to do. Through the indwelling presence of the Lord Jesus, by His Holy Spirit we have been given both POWER and AUTHORITY.

God has created everything for a purpose, and he has given everything its own authority to carry out that purpose. Power was never meant to exist for or by itself but as a tool for good. True authority converts power into service.

### Four foundational principles for understanding authority:

#### 1. The Principle of the Author:

An author is one that originates or creates. An author creates for a reason. God is God because He is the natural author of all creation. **Because God made us, He has "copyright" on us.**

The source/author of his creation has the legitimate right to state the framework of the authority he puts into his creation and the way his creation functions best.

The ultimate authority and source of all human authority is therefore the Creator, as well as the principles and laws He has established concerning humanity, which are recorded in the Scriptures.

The release of our personal authority is linked to the source (God) of our gifts and power, by which we can fully carry out what God has purposed for us to do and has entrusted to us as an assignment.

*Psalm 24:1 NKJV The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.*

2. The Principle of Authorisation:

**The principle of the Creator's authority is fundamental and essential to understanding the nature and power of our personal authority. Our authority comes from our source's authority. True authority is the right and the power to be who you were created to be.** You not only have personal authority within you, but you also have the permission and the right from your creator to carry it out in the world.

*Psalm 115:16 ESV The heavens are the LORD's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man.*

3. The Principle of Authority:

Everyone and everything are designed to fulfil its purpose – that is your authority. Your birth is evidence that God wanted to accomplish something that He had to create you to do.

Personal authority can be defined as the intrinsic gifts a person or thing possess in order to fulfil the purpose for which that person or thing was placed on this earth.

Everything depends on and must yield to something else in order to function, grow, prosper, and succeed. **Authority works in such a way that people's personal authorities are interrelated and function interdependently in community life.** We need each other's authority to fulfil our own – that is true submission.

4. The Principle of Authenticity:

No person is truly authentic until he/she is manifesting his/her inherent authority. **When you become who you were born to be, your life takes on authenticity.**

When you find the area or territory that **you're supposed to serve, you will find the secret to your fulfilment in life and your particular contribution to the human race.**

## Conclusion

**We asked 5 questions and gave 5 answers...**

1. **Who am I? I am God's child created in His image and likeness.**
2. **Why am I alive? To be loved by God.**
3. **Does my life matter? I was made for eternity and life is preparation for eternity.**
4. **What is my purpose?**
  - a. **To know and love God – Worship.**
  - b. **To learn to love each other – Fellowship.**
  - c. **To learn to become like Christ – Discipleship.**
  - d. **To learn to use my resources, talents, and gifts for God in serving Him – Ministry.**

- e. To be a witness of the saving power of the Gospel power of Jesus Christ – Evangelism.
5. How will I be able to do what God has designed and called me to do?"
- a. I have been blessed to be fruitful – I have provision from God.
  - b. I have been authorised and commissioned to do what God has called me to do.
  - c. **I have been empowered by God's Holy Spirit** to do what He has authorised me to do.
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#### Discussion Questions:

1. How did Jesus restore our lost identity and sonship?
2. We live life at one of three levels: 1. Survival Level, 2. Success Level, or 3. Significance Level. Please share at what level are you living your life at the moment?
3. Do you have a specific assignment you feel God has given you? Please share how you have embraced it, or what hindrances and obstacles you are facing.
4. **The principle of "authenticity" states that you will manifest authenticity when you become who you were born to be or find the area where you are supposed to serve, finding fulfilment in your life and your particular contribution to the human race. How authentic do you feel/think your life is?**