

“Why are we here?” has to be one of the most prevalently asked questions in history. From workers frustrated with the rat race, to cynical philosophers, to young people trying to determine their future, the question of meaning has been posed for millennia. In fact, if you search *“What is the meaning of life?”* on Google, you get 1 billion, 460 million results. And I don’t have to tell you that those 1 billion, 460 million results don’t all answer the question of meaning in the same way.

Some say the meaning of life is to find belonging and make connections with others; or to serve others and make them happy; or to make yourself happy; or to change the world; or to use your abilities to their fullest potential; or to have the most fun and enjoyment possible in the limited time you have; or to survive and pass along your DNA; or that meaning is subjective opinion; or that life is meaningless. There are lots of different answers to the question of meaning, which again, results from people having different worldviews.

Today, we want to answer the question, *“Why are we here?”* and see why the Biblical worldview gives life more meaning than any other! To do so, we’ll look at Adam, the first human God created. Genesis 2, where our sermon text is found, is like a camera lens zooming in to get a more detailed look at Day 6 of creation, when God created mankind. After using his powerful Word to create everything else in the first six days of Creation, God uniquely creates mankind, forming Adam by hand from the dust of the ground, and personally breathing life and an eternal soul into him.

God then placed Adam in the perfect Garden of Eden he’d created. In the Garden, God lovingly provided Adam with all the food and beauty he needed. What’s more, God provided Adam with purpose and meaning for life. *“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”* Really? The first man; created in God’s perfect image; the crown of God’s creation, and God makes him...the gardener?

That might not seem like much of a meaning for life. Many people’s worldviews believe that people’s lives are only meaningful if they accomplish something earth-shattering with it. Would most people say the gardener who cares for the flowers at the White House, or the President who lives in the White House, lives a more meaningful life?

But that worldview inevitably leads people to disappointment and guilt. People who aren’t in the spotlight, or can’t point to anything amazing they’ve accomplished feel unimportant, or like their lives lack meaning. It leads to a constant comparison game, and envy over people’s seemingly more meaningful lives. It leaves people feeling guilty that they haven’t done more! That’s why the Biblical worldview is so much better.

The Bible talks about our “vocations.” Your vocation is the specific place and position in life to which God has called and placed you. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, *“Each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him.”*

That changes everything, doesn’t it? If God has placed you and called you to the station in life you’re in right now, then nothing you do in your life is meaningless! Whether you’re the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, or the janitor who empties the CEO’s trashcan; whether you’re the President of a prestigious university, or a student who attends there; whether you’ve got your dream job, or dream of having a job, if God has placed you in that position and called you to that purpose, then everything you do has meaning, because it’s a way to serve God! And God sees no difference in your value!

In reality, God's purpose for Adam was much more than just a gardener. God told Adam, ***"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*** As the crown of God's creation, mankind was given special authority over everything, to be caretakers of what God had created. But it wasn't Adam's task or his position of authority that gave his life meaning. It was Adam's motivation for carrying out his God-given purpose that gave his life meaning.

When it comes to finding the meaning of life, most people's worldviews are largely self-focused. People say the meaning of life is about belonging—basically, it's about MY relationships. Or it's about using MY gifts and abilities to the fullest. Or it's about ME being happy and fulfilled. Or it's about MY survival and MY progeny. Or the meaning of life is up to MY personal interpretation. Even many of those who say the meaning of life is to help others, if you pressed them on why that gives life meaning, would answer something like, "Helping others makes ME feel good." Or "I just think that's the right thing to do." That's not to say that thinking of yourself in life is wrong. But seeking meaning in your life from your own personal feelings or accomplishments leads to problems.

If you don't get your dream job, life feels meaningless. Or if you don't have the relationships you want. Or if you don't feel like you're making a difference. Or if you feel like you have untapped potential. Or if no one acknowledges your contributions, life feels meaningless. Satan wants nothing more than to get us to think that life only has meaning when I'm being served, and satisfied, and fulfilled. And then Satan wants to crush us with despair over our meaningless life if we aren't served, satisfied, or fulfilled.

Recent studies show that the number of Americans battling depression is steadily rising, and the suicide rate has reached a 30-year high. A recent study showed that the reason is not a result of a lack of happiness, but rather, a lack of meaning. And if people look for meaning in life from their own personal feelings, it's not surprising. Because according to God's Word, the meaning of life isn't found in serving or glorifying ourselves. Life has meaning when we serve and glorify God with our lives!

Like Paul prayed, that the Thessalonian Christians might be worthy of God's calling for them, ***"so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified"*** in them. A Biblical worldview shows that the meaning and purpose of our lives is to glorify and worship God. That means, as Christians, everything we do is an opportunity to worship and serve our God, and therefore, everything we do in our God-given vocations has immeasurable meaning!

To people with a self-focused worldview, that might sound backwards. Serving God and obeying his commands gives life meaning? Most wouldn't say a slave, bound to an earthly master, leads a meaningful life. So how does obeying God and serving him give life meaning?

Along with the other beautiful, fruitful trees Adam was to care for in the Garden, God also created two specific trees with specific purposes—the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And God commanded Adam, ***"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."***

Why then did God put the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden in the first place? Was he trying to tempt Adam? Was he baiting him to fall into sin? Not at all. Through that tree, God gave Adam purpose. How so? Martin Luther explains, ***"This tree was Adam's church, altar, and pulpit. Here he was to yield to God the obedience he owed, give recognition to the Word and will of God, give thanks to God, and call upon God for aid against temptation."*** The tree was an opportunity for Adam to serve and worship God by obeying him; by trusting in his promises; by thanking God for all he'd provided; by relying on God for

spiritual strength to resist temptation. Therefore, this wasn't a burdensome restriction for Adam. Rather, he found joy through glorifying and serving God.

It's also a matter of worldview. If your worldview is limited to just earthly life, then you'll find meaning only in what applies to your span of years. But even if you live the most fulfilling, meaningful life according to worldly standards, that meaning only lasts as long as your life does. That's why King Solomon says in Ecclesiastes, "***I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me.***" Without God, all meaning in life has an expiration date.

But a Biblical worldview gives our lives meaning that lasts for eternity! As Jesus told his disciples, "***Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.***"

That was the purpose and meaning for Adam's life. God created him to have an eternal, perfect relationship with God. And that's the meaning and purpose for our lives too. God created us to have an eternal, perfect relationship with God, and he sent Jesus to make it happen!

But serving and glorifying God doesn't just give us meaning for eternal life. It gives meaning to our earthly lives too. While earthly worldviews, and our sinful natures might like to think that the meaning of life is all about me, the truth is, the most meaningful thing for our earthly lives is to serve God! Because serving God accomplishes all the "meanings of life" far better than serving ourselves!

Some say the meaning of life is to find belonging—serving God connects you to God, and to millions of fellow believers throughout the world and throughout history in an eternal bond. What better way to serve others than by following the direction and motivation God gives us to do so! How can we better change the world than by loving God, and loving others like God loves them? What better way can you use your gifts and abilities than faithfully in whatever vocations God has placed you! How can we make people happier than to remind them of Jesus' love? What can make us happier than to remember Jesus' love for us? What greater purpose for the limited time we have on earth than to share the message of eternal life? Rather than to just survive and pass along DNA, how much better it is to pass along your faith, so you can be with your children forever?

The church father Augustine once said, "***Our hearts were made for you, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in you.***" The angst and stress of the question of meaning doesn't need to make you restless, dear brothers and sisters. You can rest in the certainty of the meaning of your life—to serve the one, who served you first.