



The  
Purpose of  
Life

# **The Purpose of Life**

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# The Purpose of Life

## 1. Background

If you would do a random, informal survey of people on the street, asking them what they think the purpose of life might be, you will get many different answers. Some will say happiness is the purpose of life. Others will say to have fun. Many will say to work. Still others will say to find and follow Jesus. All of these are certainly good answers. However, all of these answers are incomplete.

Certainly, you can assign yourself any purpose you like for your life. You can decide to be an auto mechanic, teacher, artist, house-wife, or whatever. That is your choice. It is a unique attribute of being human. However, we are not going to be talking about that kind of purpose in this book. We will be talking about the original and fundamental purpose of life, by design. Why are we here? Why are we alive? What is this life all about? Where are we going, or supposed to be going? Are we just here to grow old and die, while experiencing a few assorted things along the way?

Man is but one form of life. Our search for the purpose of life should embrace all life forms. On the other hand, man is unique and therefore his purpose of life can be expected to be somewhat different and on a higher plane. In reality, there are multiple dimensions to the

purpose of life. We will explore several of them here; including ideas you may not have thought about before. Keep an open mind. Otherwise, there will be no place to put any new insights you might discover. Let's go....

## **2. Dual Purposes of All Life**

Simple observation confirms that all living beings seem to have two innate and fundamental purposes; one being a purpose of the whole, and the other being a purpose of the individual, or self. For example, a bumble bee lives its life and gives its life for reproduction of its species, for cross-pollination of plant life, and for support of the ecosystem through directly or indirectly becoming food for other living things upon its

death. On the other hand, it also lives its life seeking nourishment, comfort and self-preservation.



Trees also have dual purposes. A tree creates shade for other life forms to thrive in, and also secures the earth with its roots, preventing unnecessary erosion. It provides habitat for creatures such as birds and squirrels, and its sap, wood and bark can provide useful materials for people and for some other creatures, as well. Some trees also produce edible fruit.

At the same time, a tree has a purpose of the self. The tree functions to grow and preserve its wellbeing, sending its roots down as deep as necessary to obtain the water it needs, and

sprouting new branches and leaves to grow. It may even adapt its shape and orientation to best interact with the sun's rays, which it also needs. And, the tree reproduces itself.

We human beings also have dual innate purposes; a purpose to serve the whole and a purpose of the individual, or self. In striving to serve the whole, we pursue dreams, ambitions, social and political endeavors, we sacrifice, give, love, explore, join together for the greater good, etc. We may choose to be an entertainer, musician, painter or sculptor seeking to bring joy to others. We bear and raise children, write books, and become teachers and counselors. We strive to find cures for diseases that we may not personally have, and invent things that can help other people live happier lives.

In striving to fulfill the purpose of the individual, or self, we seek self-preservation and comfort. We may exercise, be diet conscious, take vitamins, buy good quality shoes, comfortable furniture, and listen to music that relaxes us after a stressful day. We secure the books and education we need to get ahead, and we choose the friends that enhance our life.

Unfortunately, there is often conflict between the purpose of the whole and the purpose of the individual, or self. Sometimes, people feel they have to make a choice of which one to pursue. You know you should get some exercise, but just can't find the time or will to do it. Some people would like to take supplements and eat better quality food, but they just can't afford it. Sometimes people feel pressured to compromise their personal integrity in order to advance their goals and ambitions in life.

While past experience may tell us otherwise, such a contradiction between these two purposes is not necessary. In an ideal world, one that God intended for man, there would not be innate conflict or contradiction between these two purposes. Imagine a world in which there would not be a purpose of the individual that does not recognize, support and contribute to the purpose of the whole, nor would there be a purpose of the whole which does not recognize, support and contribute to the purpose of the individual. Life would be filled with win-win choices, rather than winning at the expense of others, always having to choose between the lesser of two evils, or compromising what we know is right. Such a world can exist. It is actually the world God intended and planned for mankind.

Even though it may not be our reality yet, nevertheless, the dual purposes of all life forms remain, and are obvious to see. The question we must ask, is: How can we fulfill both of these innate purposes, and harmonize the two? We will address that question in the following pages.

### **3. Womb for our Eternal Spirit**

Not only do we have a purpose of the whole and a purpose of the individual, or self, but we also have both an external and internal purpose of the self. Externally, we take care of our physical comforts and needs so we can grow healthy and strong. What makes this more important than most people might think is that the physical body is the vehicle of the eternal

spirit, and it is important to the growth and development of the spirit. Thus, we need to pay attention to, and use wisdom in, caring for our physical body.

But, more importantly, we have an eternal spirit which lives within our body and grows and matures based on our physical life on earth. The late Dr. Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012) called our physical life the “womb for our spirit”. Similar to the gestation period of nine months in our mother’s womb, where we must successfully develop all of our physical organs and capabilities in order to function properly in our earthly life, we must use this “earthly womb” to develop our eternal spirit in preparation for our life in the eternal spirit world. In a sense, it is after our physical death when our real life finally begins. Our physical life may seem long, but relative to eternity, it is very very short. We

are given only a few decades to use our physical body to grow our eternal spirit. What and how must we grow?

In our physical, earthly life, we need our lungs, heart, and all of our organs and senses which develop in our mother's womb. In our eternal spiritual life, we will need the ability to experience compassion and give and receive love. We will need our "heart lungs" to be fully developed. We need to do that during our life on earth, where the time and space environment is more conducive to growing our love. Therefore, while the external purpose of our earthly life is to take care of our external needs and comforts, our internal purpose is to grow our love.

If we do not invest our lives and efforts in growing our love here, then we will be born into our eternal spiritual life with a very limited

ability to function and be happy. If we have not developed our love by the time we die, we will be born into the spiritual eternal world like a baby born with no feet or arms. We will have deepest regret that we did not make better use of our physical life in terms of growing our love. It is the most essential purpose of our earthly life. We must not squander it. Unfortunately, because few people seem to be aware of this fact, they effectively are wasting their one and only physical life to some extent, their womb for the spirit.

## **4. Even God Needs an Object**

By definition, a subject cannot be a subject without an object. In the same vein, an object

cannot be an object without a subject. The concept of peace implies at least two entities in relationship with each other, as does the concept of love. Harmony cannot exist apart from a relationship that it applies to. Since virtually every entity we know of is in a relationship of subject or object to something else, this leads us to another dimension of man's purpose of life: to be both a subject and an object.

You may not think of yourself as a leader, or someone in a subject role in life, but if you have a dog, house plant or gold fish, you are in the role of a subject. Certainly, as a parent of children, you know you are in the role of subject. It does not have to be scary. It can be a wonderful and fulfilling experience, and should be.

You may not think of yourself as being in

an object role in life, but if you have a boss, parent, spouse, or live within any kind of political system, you are in the role of an object. We are also in an object position to nature and its laws. This role, too, can be a wonderful experience and fulfilling. It depends upon you.

You might say, “Well that’s so common sensical and childish; everyone knows that.” However, this simple and fundamental concept must apply to God, also. As much as most faithful believers may conceptualize a God who needs nothing at all, by definition, this notion may be very wrong. Let’s explore it.

We can attribute many qualities to God, such as unconditional love, omniscience, omnipotence, mercy, kindness, etc. The problem for God is, what good would all the love in the universe be if he had no one to share it with?

Would a world-famous comedian get satisfaction telling himself jokes in a dark empty closet? Do we have a similar crazy notion of God?

If God has as much or more personality than any human being has, and if God has as much or more love than any human being has, then even he must have an object to share these with. Otherwise, they have no meaning or value. Are we stretching you already? Is God too good and almighty to experience loneliness? It would seem not, if you accept the narratives in the Bible. We are told not only that God loves us and so loved the world,<sup>1</sup> but we are also told to reciprocate that love; “Love God,” was the most important thing to do, according to Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Holy Bible, RSV, John 3:16

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 22:37

Well, it just makes sense. We become aware that a creature has compassion when we observe it sharing that compassion with its offspring, or other object. A bird shows its compassion when it cares for and feeds its young. The same for a lioness, or any other creature.

But, how much can an earthworm be an object to the personality and heart of God? Not much, it would seem. Relationship can only be shared on the basis of common traits or characteristics. An adult can relate with a small child in simple ways and terms. Whatever minimal extent God can experience his own qualities and likeness expressed in an earthworm would be his basis for relating with it.

Thus, a horse should be able to experience a far more sophisticated relationship with God than an earthworm. And, in the same way, a

human being should be able to experience the ultimate relationship with God of all life forms. Yes, your Jack Russell Terrier must be in there somewhere, too.

Is it a human construct to think that God and man can and even must bear similarities and commonalities? Well, if you can agree that the laws of nature could not somehow be a product of matter and energy, but rather a product of God's own design since they seemed to exist even prior to the Big Bang, then one of those laws of nature is the law of cause and effect. It indicates not just that every effect must have a cause, but that there must exist some similarity between the cause and the effect. The spin you put on a cue ball will have a predictable effect on the other ball(s) it impacts on the pool table. Otherwise, there would be absolutely no rational basis for any of the natural sciences.

Therefore, the statement in the Bible saying that man was made in God's image makes logical sense.<sup>3</sup> It would need to be that way. If it could somehow be otherwise, then God might be a subject without any object with which to relate. And, if God has all that compassion and personality, that would not be good, from God's point of view. Maybe that's why God somehow just can't leave man alone, and keeps chasing after people to relate with him. Maybe he needs us. What greater purpose could we have in life than to be an object to God?

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<sup>3</sup> Genesis 1:26

## **5. The Quality of the Object**

What kind of object are we talking about? What could be the value of an object, and what purpose would an object serve? It's common human experience that when something is totally unlike our self, or dissonant, we cannot experience peace and happiness with it. We look for some element of commonality in everything we experience. When we find it, it makes us happy. The strength of a mountain, the symmetry and beauty of a flower, the affection of a pet, the intrigue of a good book, etc. That would mean that if God could find some commonality in each of us, then he could experience something of himself reflected back to him and, as a result, experience happiness.

Well, that all sounds nice, but if we take a peek at the Good Book, we find a problem. On

the one hand, it sounds like we're on the right track when we see that God allegedly expressed a lot of happiness when he saw the first man and woman,<sup>4</sup> but on the other hand, the Bible is full of God's unhappiness, frustration and even anger toward man.<sup>5</sup> What's up? The key lies in the quality of the object.

Ever babysat a real brat of a kid? Not fun, right? It might have been me when I was young. Ever have a dog that absolutely refused to respond to anything you said to it, or that was deaf and/or blind? The point is, just being a human being may not qualify us to bring happiness to God as his long sought-after object. We may not acknowledge his existence, welcome him into our life, think anything like he does, nor feel any compassion toward him.

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<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1:31

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 6:6

What kind of object would that be?

But regardless, human beings still have one thing that no other life form has.... the *potential* to be God's object and source of happiness. A cow is just never going to empathize with God's heart, reason with him, or understand him. Thus, it would seem clear that one major, if not *THE* major purpose of man's life, is to grow and mature ourselves to become a viable object to God's mind and heart. Notice, I didn't say be religious. I suspect there are many devout, religious people who are anything but resonant with God's heart and mind. I don't need to explain what I mean. So, how can a person become resonant with God as his object?

## **6. Becoming a Mature Object and Fulfilling our Dual Purposes**

For an omniscient God, getting a Ph.D. in literature probably won't enable a person to be resonant with him. Memorizing the Bible or Koran probably won't do it. Amassing a financial fortune probably won't do it, either. God surely has no use for money or worldly knowledge. Fortunately, there is an obscure and simplistic hint in the Bible that can give us a clue.

God is said to have expressed to the first humans that they should “be fruitful, and multiple and have dominion” over their environment.<sup>6</sup> According to the insights of Dr. Moon, this simple expression had profound meaning for human beings. In fact, God literally

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<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:28

outlined the road map to achieving the purpose of life for his children.

Dr. Moon taught that the “fruitful” thing meant naturally maturing one’s heart, mind and personality to such a level that they would resonate with God, himself. Well, that’s what Jesus was also advocating,<sup>7</sup> and it makes sense. A person would thereby become an ideal object of God, internally. Resonating with God literally means that God could experience your life with you, through your eyes, ears and all of your senses. It doesn’t mean poring over a book of scriptures or performing religious rituals and sacraments, or even going to Church. God never originally planned to see organized religion in the world. The animals didn’t need it, and neither should man. But, we messed up. Anyway,

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5:48

the original intention was that nature would provide an incredible training ground for developing our minds and heart to resonate with him.

Since every created thing is an expression of God, and bears some resemblance to him, then we should be able to learn all about him as we learn about and experience nature in all its wonder. So, the first step in realizing our purpose of life was to naturally mature our heart, mind and personality to resemble God's own. Shouldn't the apple fall close to the tree? Every offspring resembles its parent.

But, the second point offered an even higher level of experiential nurturing and education for mankind.... in the family. To "multiply" contained profound meaning, also, according to Dr. Moon. He said that the human family was to

be our virtual “school of love”. It was to be the place we could learn everything we needed to learn about compassion, virtue and heart.

Now, maybe your family wasn’t that kind of family; neither was mine and many other people’s. But, the potential again is there, by design. The adult parents were to grow and learn to love each other and their children in new and profound ways. Through this, they would simultaneously grow their love for, and their similarity and commonality with, God at the same time.

The children would grow and learn to love their parents and each other, also. From that, they would form a foundation upon which they, too, could develop a love for, and similarity and commonality with, God. All-in-all, 12 kinds of love can be experienced and developed in a

family. And, from all those experiences of compassion, virtue and heart, both the parents and the children would learn how to love and harmonize with people of other families, and also with the creatures in nature. From pre-k to Ph.D., all forms of compassion can be learned in the family.

The third point, to “have dominion,” meant to extend that compassion learned and experienced in the “school of love” (family) to all of nature and to the environment. What else is there? All other skills and knowledge would be just tools and mechanisms through which to express all that compassion and heart.

Plus, having developed and experienced all that love, a person would be totally prepared to live a rich life pursuing not only the purpose of the individual, or self, but especially the purpose

of the whole. Someone once said love must be shared. Obviously, life should be far different than what we have been experiencing until now.

## **7. Happiness**

As you recall, many will tell you the purpose of life is happiness? Well, that's exactly correct. But, as we have seen, that doesn't mean just catching the latest thrill-packed movie, or enjoying your favorite dish at a great restaurant.

Neither does that mean the purpose of life is simply to bring joy to God. God would strongly disagree with that. Some people actually think that living a suffering life can somehow bring happiness to God. He may need us to make sacrifices from

time to time, and they may even be painful ones, but human suffering alone cannot be a source of joy for a compassionate God.

If God needs us as an object for his own love, heart and personality, then he will feel the greatest happiness when *WE*, his children, are happy. Likewise, what can bring a human being more happiness than to know that God is happy with them? It must be a mutual happiness. It must be a win-win situation. God will not be happy at our expense, nor us at his. We are in this thing together.

So, the purpose of life is ultimately the happiness of both God and man, together. Both the purpose of the whole and the purpose of the individual, or self, must be satisfied in order to turn this into complete reality. And, the process for growing and becoming the people who can experience that fulfillment and happiness, and who

can be that object of God's love and heart, was originally intended to be accomplished in the "school of love," or family; both from the position of children and later in the position of spouses and parents.

All the myriad other small and large self-assigned purposes that we can give our lives are like ornaments on the Christmas tree. They become extensions of the talents, virtues, passions, and dreams that each of us has, built upon and modeled after the compassion we learned and developed in the school of love and then in the greater world beyond that.

Many blessings to you as you pursue the fulfilling of your purpose of life. Don't expect the process to be smooth or easy. Challenges and frustrations are part of the curriculum of this school of love. Welcome them. Overcome and resolve

them. It is all for our learning and development. We are all destined to graduate and fulfill our purpose of life, someday.