



Solution for Life

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Dear Friends,

We are excited to bring this newsletter to you. The theme “Purpose” has come out of constantly seeking God for direction on how to continue to live out our lives for Him in this world that is moving so fast. Our prayer has been, “Show us how to live out our purpose in this frantic society.”

Recently I was with Katie, my granddaughter, who is in seventh grade. As she finished her Starbucks double chocolate Frappuccino she asked if I was reading any good books. I said, “Yes, **Made for This.**” Her response, with a puzzled look on her face was, “What’s it about?” I explained that it is about living our lives according to God’s purpose.” Quickly she replied, “How hard is that? It’s to love people and live for Jesus.”

We pray you are encouraged by this newsletter and will be challenged, as we are, to live out God’s purpose in your lives.

Blessings, Jessie

Why? | by Daniel S. Westlund

Behind everything we do there is a purpose and a reason. We might call it motivation, desire, a goal, a means to describe our purpose from which we make our plans for the day, the week, the year, even our lives.

When I was a young man my goal was to be successful, create wealth, live comfortably, and enjoy life. This seemed reasonable. After all, it is the American dream. I blended it with my faith as a Christian to be prosperous and happy. Then I encountered what it meant to live for God, my creator. It was in July of 1971 when I surrendered my life to Christ. October 1, 1971 I was filled (baptized) in the Holy Spirit. I remember clearly two things from that experience. One, I immediately saw how lost man is spiritually, and as I opened the Bible I understood it as I read it through in the next ten weeks.

My reason for living and the reason I existed changed

radically from the one I had created for myself. The course of my life was redirected from that moment. I remember reading Isaiah 46:9-11: “Remember the former things, of those long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’ From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.”

In Isaiah 43:7 I saw I was created for the glory of God, in Jeremiah 29:11 that God had a plan for my life, and in Isaiah 48:17 “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.”

God created us for himself. The Westminster Shorter Catechism asks the question:

“What is the chief end of man?” Answer: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” This is not the purpose most individuals see for their lives. However, it is God’s purpose for our existence. The Apostle Paul was in Athens and saw an altar with this inscription: “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.” Paul then went on to proclaim to all the philosophers gathered about The True and Living God who made the world and everything in it: “...he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’” (Acts 17:25-28)

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Recommended Books

Made for This: 40 Days to Living Your Purpose by Jennie Allen

Adorned: Living Out the Beauty of the Gospel Together by Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

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Solution for growth

Dirty Dishes and the Glory of God | by Stephen Westlund

In the mid 1950s, J.R.R. Tolkien published his masterpiece *The Lord of the Rings*. This book series was made into movies in the early 2000s and it tells a story of a place called Middle Earth. In Middle Earth the source of ultimate power is centered in a little ring, and the holder of the ring is too often influenced and corrupted by the absolute power this ring holds. As the story unfolds, we see two forces at work in Middle Earth: good and evil. Both wage war, but with different goals. The evil wants to return this “Lord of the Rings” to the supreme evil being of Middle Earth, while the good guides its stewards to destroy this ring. Through providence and circumstance the task of destroying this ring is entrusted to Frodo, who is a Hobbit (the smallest and humblest intelligent beings in Middle Earth). On the journey to destroy the ring, Frodo and his companions find themselves lost and trapped in a mine, and Frodo, utterly discouraged, sits next to his trusted friend and counselor, Gandalf and says...

“I wish the Ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had happened.”

If you live long enough, at some point in your life you’ve probably said, or will say these same words... “I wish none of this had happened.” I think maybe our desire for the American Dream is born out of a desire to avoid the circumstances of life that make us say such words. But no matter how hard we try to avoid such circumstances, life has a way of unfolding anyway, filled with its seasons of joy and those terrible times of sadness... times we wished had never come to us.

When such times come, what do we do? I propose we do exactly what

Gandalf advises Frodo to do. Sitting there in that dark mine on the edge of hopelessness, the wise old counselor gently responds to Frodo...

“So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All



we have to decide is what to do with the time given to us.”

No matter how life unfolds, we must decide what to do with the time given to us. Now please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying you can change your circumstances through a decision of your will. I am saying, right now, in the very circumstance you find yourself, whether it be good or evil, decide how to respond. And did you know our Heavenly Father has given us instruction on how to make this decision? In Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth he wrote...

“...whatever you do, do it for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Paul didn’t say when things are going well, or when you are feeling happy, or when you like what you are doing, do it all for the glory of God. He said “whatever you do.” And in context, Paul was referring to the food we eat. Paul’s message is very clear, even in the small stuff of life: give God glory.

When we do everything for the glory of God, an amazing transaction takes place in heavenly realms. Our part is to decide to give God glory. God’s

response to our attitude and decision to bring Him glory is to give every moment of our lives purpose. Even the smallest, most mundane things in life, when done for the glory of God, have purpose and meaning. Sometimes I wonder if, when the servants of God wash dirty dishes for His glory, do those in heavenly realms stop and notice God being glorified and lifted high as the dishes are washed clean?

The wisest man to ever live understood this principle. His name was Solomon, and the book of Ecclesiastes captures his pursuit of meaning in life here on earth. The book opens with the following observation:

“Everything is meaningless,” says the teacher, “Completely meaningless.” (Ecclesiastes 1:1)

Kind of dark, if you ask me. But if you keep reading, Solomon makes the following observation regarding how we should do the things we do.

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

And when Solomon ends his pursuit for meaning and purpose, he comes to one absolute:

“Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey His commands, for this is everyone’s duty. God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

These words from Solomon come full circle to Paul’s instruction. If God will judge everything we do, then we must decide to do everything for His glory... even those dirty dishes.

Solution *for women*

Finding Our Purpose | by Kristen Alewine

I love podcasts. My husband laughs at me because over half of my conversations start with, “So I was listening to this podcast...” I can listen to them while I’m cleaning, cooking, running (just kidding – I don’t run. But it seems like a good time to listen to a podcast if you do!), or relaxing. It’s a great way to take in a lot of information. If you listen to too many of them (like I do) you start to notice trending topics. One that is on the rise as of late is the subject of purpose. Even just a simple search in my podcast app for the word “purpose” brings up 38 different shows! Here are a few examples: Live with Purpose, Leading with Purpose, Your Purpose-Centered Life, and Finding Passion & Purpose. The titles sound good, and I’m sure some of the shows actually ARE good, but sometimes I wonder if we’ve started seeing “finding our purpose” as an end goal and putting that above knowing God. We feel like we’re lacking when we hear someone talk about a vision God gave them for a particular ministry, or how God

called them to foster children, or how they just KNEW God wanted them to be an author, speaker, pastor, whatever it is. We can think, “Well what’s my purpose? Did I miss a memo from God? I should certainly have a big dream I’m chasing down by now. Who even am I?!” PANIC! Or is that just me?

What I’ve been learning is that the question “Who am I?” can really only be answered within the context of a better question: “Who is God?” He was here first and He made me (and you) to glorify Him, to reflect Him. That’s our purpose in a nutshell: to know Him so that we can be like Him. And what does that reflection look like? It looks like being loving, gracious, kind, faithful, truthful, just, patient, holy, and merciful to name a few. Of course, this doesn’t play out the same for everyone. These qualities can manifest themselves in as many different ways as there are people. Can it look like writing a book? Yes. Can it look like starting a ministry?

Yes. Can it look like taking each day as it comes and faithfully loving our families and our neighbors? Just as much yes.

This isn’t an excuse to stop asking God what He has for you to do. Maybe He will end up sending you halfway across the world! It is a recommendation, however, to stop worrying that your “purpose” doesn’t look as big or fancy as someone else’s, that you can’t put a title to it, that it doesn’t have a color-coded five-year plan attached. Are you getting to know God better? Are you learning to hear His voice? Do you look more like Him now than you did last year? These should be where we invest our time and energy. And as we walk in faithfulness to Him, that elusive “purpose” we’re all searching for will likely have appeared somewhere along the way, possibly without us even noticing.

Solution *for caring*

Caring for the Individuals | by Jessie A. Westlund

Many people have contacted us with needs and struggles. Often we are asked why there are so many difficulties. Their words are often, “Why is this happening to me when I have tried to live for Christ?” Our Lord cares for the broken-hearted. He says this in Isaiah 61. He cares for the multitudes and the individuals in the crowd. What do we say to people who are going through deep times of darkness and crisis in their lives? Often there are no easy answers. Many of them need miracles. However, walking alongside people who are hurting, praying with them and for them is the beginning of

helping. Encouraging them with the words of Christ is the greatest support one can give to the broken hearted.

I was speaking to a friend whose loved one is dying and she sits and holds her hand and prays. This is all she can do. Other times we can give tangible gifts to relieve the burden. The point is, expressing care is one of the ways we serve Christ. Someday we may need someone to come alongside us and demonstrate the love and compassion of Christ. You may be in a situation like this now. Jesus loves you and cares for you and is with you every minute to strengthen you in your burden. God says, “Fear not, for I

am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isaiah 41:10.

In closing, we live in busy times. Our challenge is to care for the hurting and wounded. Caring takes many forms but first we need to be available. Our loving heavenly Father calls on believers to unselfishly love, help, pray, or give to someone in need.

Are you wounded? Do you need encouragement? Do you have a need? Let us know so we can help support you.

From the truth found in the Bible and in Christ, I, like Paul, “consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord.” (Philippians 3:8) “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21) My purpose, why I exist, is to know God in His fullness, to live in His presence both now and forever bringing Him and Him alone honor and glory.

Solution *for the future*

Watch & Pray | by Daniel S. Westlund

We are currently in the period of time called “times of the Gentiles.” (Luke 21:24) This time began in 70 AD and continues to this day. The Apostle Paul, through the Holy Spirit, reveals to us that, “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved.” (Romans 11:25-26) Paul calls this a mystery. This is a part of God’s plan since the foundation of the world. I recently went to the Broadway play “Fiddler on the Roof” with Jessie, which depicts this truth shown to Paul almost 2000 years ago.

In 1948 with the rebirth of Israel as a nation, in 1967 the capture of Jerusalem by Israel, and in 2018 the declaration

by the United States that Jerusalem is the Capital of Israel, all prophetic signs, even warning us that the time of the Gentiles is coming to an end.

The “times of the Gentiles” is the period of time given by God for the Gospel to be preached to the whole world, to all peoples. Jesus said just before his arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection that, “the Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)

The convergence of the signs related to the nation of Israel and the spread of the Gospel to the whole world tells us Jesus is coming soon. I am now looking for the rise of scoffers in an increasing

number who will mock and ridicule this truth. “They will say, where is this coming he promised?” (II Peter 3:4)

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (II Peter 3:8-9)

Are you ready for the coming of Christ? It is very near, even at the door.

Bulletin Board

New Website

The first part of 2020 we will launch a new website. We want to thank Kathie and Brent Babcock for the amazing amount of volunteer hours they are putting in to make this unfold. If you would like to receive information on the launch, go to our present site and there is a button you can click to subscribe.

Women’s Spring Retreat

We are looking forward to our Radical Joy Retreat which will be **April 25, 2020**. More information will be on the website and in the winter newsletter.

Signs of the Times

Dan Westlund will be doing Signs of the Times seminars in 2020.

Message from Dan & Jessie

It has been a busy year with our move. We are getting settled into our new home. At this point in life we have had many experiences through which God has taught us the joy in trusting Christ, just as he continues to teach us now. God is leading us to come alongside people and churches to teach and support them with the wonderful truths he has taught us over our years in ministry. Some think the autumn season of life is a time to coast but God has said to us, “Dan and Jessie, keep going and love and teach people about the sufficiency of Jesus for all situations and in all seasons of life.” Thank you for making this possible through your gifts, volunteer hours, and prayers. We appreciate your support which we

get to see God use as people find the love and sufficiency of Christ through Bible studies, one-on-one mentoring, publishing, and love gifts.

We look forward to you continuing to be part of this ministry. If you would like to be part of a prayer team email us at sfl@solutionforlife.org. We will share needs as they arise. If you would like to support the ministry financially, send your gift in the enclosed envelope or online at www.solutionforlife.org. Thank you again for your faithfulness.

Love in Christ,

Dan and Jessie Westlund