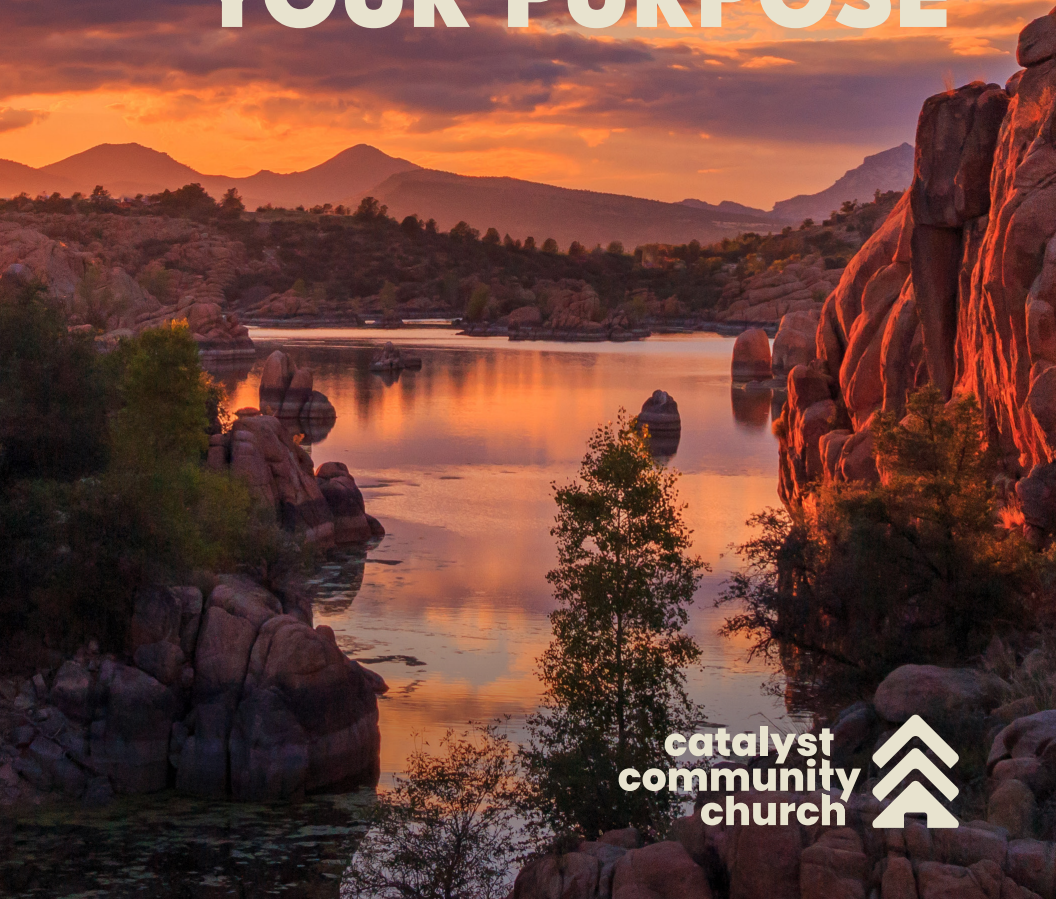




DAYS **TO DISCOVERING** **YOUR PURPOSE**



catalyst
community
church





DAY

WHAT EVERYONE WANTS BUT CAN'T SEEM TO FIND

"The two most important days in life are the day you are born and the day you discover the reason why."

-MARK TWAIN



SEVERAL YEARS AGO KATHY CAPRINO, a Leadership Coach, writer, and speaker, conducted a survey within her leadership community. The survey asked only one question: "If you could say in one word what you want more of in life, what would that be?"

TAKE A LOOK AT HER SUMMARY OF THE TOP FIVE MOST COMMON ANSWERS:

#1

HAPPINESS

Biggest challenge: "Not knowing what I want to do."

#2

MONEY

Biggest challenge: "Not having enough money or time to accomplish the things I want to do."

#3

FREEDOM

Biggest challenge: "Having the freedom to find my 'true purpose'"

#4

PEACE

Biggest challenge: "Lack of clarity about who I am and my purpose."

#5

JOY

Biggest challenge: "How to find the right role or position for me now that will bring joy in my work."

Why Caprino's study is helpful is that it is simple and ordinary. It is neither a scientific study nor is it a research paper. It was a personal question. What are you searching for in life?

The number one answer was happiness, and the biggest problem was not knowing how to find it.

Caprino's study also shows a critical connection we all make and that is that our personal sense of happiness is connected to our sense of purpose. Notice how similar answers are for questions 1, 3, 4 and 5. There is a clear connection made by the respondents between their personal happiness and finding their purpose.

This is the very same connection expressed by Mark Twain in the opening quote. Although Twain is most often known for his humor, his quote here really hits the nail on the head. In our hearts we don't believe that our lives are meaningless and we don't want our story to be futile. On the contrary, we believe our happiness and satisfaction in life is closely connected with what Twain calls "discovering the reason why," or the reason why we were born.

This little booklet is written to help you thoughtfully answer those two questions over the next several days, to point you toward true happiness, and to help discover where your purpose is found.

PERSONAL PROCESSING QUESTIONS

How would you respond to Kathy Caprino's survey?

What would be the one word you use to describe what you want more of in life?

What has been the greatest challenge you have faced in finding happiness?

DAY 2



THE SURPRISING PLACE HAPPINESS & HEALTH ARE FOUND

“The good life is built with
good relationships.”

**– ROBERT WALDINGER,
PSYCHIATRIST & PROFESSOR,
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL**



PERHAPS THE MOST COMPELLING STUDY on happiness ever undertaken has been the the Harvard Study on Adult Development. It has been taking place for 88 years now making it the world's longest ongoing study. Beginning in 1938 it has tracked the development of 724 men asking about their home, work, and life in general.

The study focused on two very different groups. The first group consisted of those considered privileged. They were all students at Harvard pursuing their education at a school recognized for providing the highest levels of academia. The second group was similar in age but from the poorest neighborhoods in Boston. Who would find more happiness in life, the privileged or the poor?

Most of us would assume that those better off in life would have an advantage. They stood a much better chance to find good jobs, become wealthy, attract spouses, afford big houses, take nice vacations, and achieve great things making an impact on the world. In the end, the results concluded that NONE of these things ultimately makes you happy.

How was the study performed? Every two years of their lives the men were surveyed. They were asked questions about their home life, and as their families grew the family members were also included in the interviews. In addition to interviewing the men, the study collected concrete medical data on their physical health and mental health.

The Harvard Study was able to provide unique insight to the lives of these 724 men over their entire lifetime. The value of this study is that it was not a one-time survey but cohesive conclusions drawn from systematic surveys done over a 75- year period—the participant's entire life of ups and downs.

Additionally, their medical data was able to definitively demonstrate the actual physical and mental health of each individual apart from the personal and family interviews. There has never been another study like Harvard's Adult Development Study.

So what is the big takeaway from carrying out one of the most comprehensive studies on happiness ever undertaken? In the words of Robert Waldinger, the current director of the project, "The clearest message from our study is this: good relationships keep us happy and healthier. Period."

WALDINGER GIVES THREE SPECIFIC LESSONS THEY HAVE LEARNED:

#1

Social connections are really good for us and loneliness kills. People who are socially connected are happier, physically healthier and live longer than people who are less connected.

#2

It is not the quantity of relationships but the quality of close relationships. The study showed that conflict is bad for our health and that good relationships are protective of our health.

#3

Good relationships not only protect our bodies but also our brains. Good relationships help us keep our brain function and memory longer.

“Many of our men when they were starting out as young adults really believed that fame and wealth and high achievement were what they needed to go after to have a good life. But over and over, over these 75 years, our study has shown that the people who fared the best were the people who leaned in to relationships, with family, with friends, with community...**THE GOOD LIFE IS BUILT WITH GOOD RELATIONSHIPS.”**

So, the longest study ever conducted on human happiness suggests that the good life is built with good relationships. This brings up a very important question. Why? Why is the good life found in relationship?

At Catalyst Community Church we believe that the Harvard study points us to an obvious truth we often overlook, and that is there is a loving God who has created humans for relationship. At the very heart of what it means to be human is the truth that we have been designed to know and enjoy relationship with God and with others. To learn more about the story of how God created the world and his plan to bring all things back into relationship with him and with one another go on to Day 3.

PERSONAL PROCESSING QUESTIONS

The Harvard Study brings us face to face with a life changing truth. Our search for happiness is found in deep meaningful relationship.

What about you? What implications does the Harvard Study have on your own personal search for happiness and purpose?





DAY 3

THE STORY OF GOD & THE DESIGN FOR RELATIONSHIP

“All that we call human history — money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery — is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.”

— **C.S. LEWIS**



YESTERDAY WE EXAMINED A FASCINATING STUDY

on happiness. What is so radical about the Harvard Study on Adult Development is that it reorients the search for happiness and purpose toward relationship. This inevitably leads to a BIG question the Harvard study does not explore—the why. Why is there a connection between our purpose and happiness with relationship? We believe it is the story of God. Below the entire Biblical narrative has been summarized into three major acts.



Created for Relationship

Our world begins with a loving God who created all things, and the world he created was good. The very pinnacle of his creation was humans, male and female. Genesis 1:27 says that Adam and Eve were uniquely made in God's image and he placed them in a paradise, the garden of Eden.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:1, 27).

What does it mean to be created in God's image? It is to have the ability to be in relationship with God, the Maker. Adam and Eve were designed to know and enjoy God and one another. To be human is to be made for relationship. But to be human also means to be able to reflect who God is. In knowing God, humans are to be like him; they are to image him like a mirror.

God created human beings to be like him and to have unhindered fellowship with him—to receive His love and reciprocate it. And when his work of creation was finished he saw that it was “very good” (Gen. 1:31).

#2 Broken Relationship

The perfect harmony that existed in the garden of Eden between God and humans and between Adam and Eve did not last. The world we live in today is far different than Eden. Our world seems more like a battlefield of brokenness—in our countries, our communities, and even in our own lives. We see heartbreaking circumstances that can leave us confused, frustrated, or angry. If we sit and think about it we wonder whether a good God even exists, or perhaps give up hope that he even could. What happened to our world?

What is happening today first began in the garden with Adam and Eve. The first man and woman made a choice that broke their relationship with God. It was not accidental, it was intentional. Adam and Eve chose to ignore God's instructions. They wanted to decide what was good for themselves. They stopped trusting God.

God called Adam and Eve's choice sin, and it was no small thing. Their actions broke their relationship with him and with one another. It had results they could not foresee. In choosing to sin Adam and Eve experienced guilt toward God and separation from him. The guilt they felt was new, and it caused them to run away from God and not toward him.

The separation was also new. As a result of their sin they were sent out of God's presence, out of the garden. This was devastating because God was the one who revealed to them what was good. Their relationship with God was at the very core of understanding their own identity and purpose. Now their relationship with him was broken and so was their ability to understand themselves.

But even greater than guilt and separation is death. Both physical and spiritual death entered into the world the moment Adam and Eve sinned. The entrance of physical death meant that their bodies would not live forever, that their days on earth were numbered. The entrance of spiritual death meant that their hearts had learned to love and value things more than God himself. Mankind's heart would become like a factory making one idol after another to attempt to find happiness apart from God. These empty pursuits only lead to despair.

If this were the end of God's story it would be terrible and tragic. It would be the worst news the world could have ever received. Mankind is guilty before God, separated from him, on a path toward death with no hope of finding lasting fulfillment.

But God did not allow sin and death to have the final say. Before Adam and Eve left the garden God spoke a word of promise into the world: God was going to overturn the curse of sin and death and his people would not be left without hope. God would send a Rescuer who would reconcile God and his people once again.

#3 Rescue & Restored Relationship through Jesus

For generations after the garden the world awaited God's promise of defeating sin and death. How could a people separated from God once again come close to him?

How could the original relationship be restored to like new, no more guilt or shame? The one word answer is Jesus.

JESUS THE RESCUER

(RESCUED FROM SIN AND DEATH & OFFERED LIFE)

You may have already asked the question in your mind, “Why didn’t God just forgive Adam and Eve?” Great question. To answer this we need a quick lesson on God’s character, specifically his justice and his love and how they must work together. What is important to know is that God is perfect in all of his attributes. God’s perfect love for you cannot violate his perfect justice. If God were to allow any sin to go unpunished no matter how small, he would not be just. And, the just judgment for sin is death.

Now let’s look at God’s perfect love. Out of his love for us God has acted to restore our relationship with him. But how? God himself stepped into our place and died for our sins. Knowing that we could not pay the penalty for our sins, and that we would be eternally separated from him, God acted to rescue us from death. John 3:16 is perhaps the most straightforward explanation of what God has done for us.

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him.”

Jesus died in our place for our sins. What has happened to our sin and guilt? It has been forgiven. Our guilt has been removed. What about death? Through Jesus God has offered us eternal life. Jesus has rescued us from sin, and guilt, and death.



JESUS THE RECONCILER (RESTORED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD)

“that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:19

Jesus has done more than just rescue us; he has become our reconciler. Jesus has restored the relationship between us and God. We are no longer separated from God because our sin no longer separates us from God. Because our sins have been forgiven and our guilt has been removed, our relationship with God has been restored.

We are told we are no longer separated from God but adopted as sons and daughters into his family and made citizens of heaven. We are told we literally have a NEW life and identity.

RESTORED RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

God’s work to rescue and reconcile us also addresses another important aspect. Remember, when God made humans not only did he create us for relationship, but also to reflect him like a mirror. God’s desire is that we share the very same sacrificial love that he has first shown to us. God’s love for us serves as the model for how we are to pursue relationship with others.

God’s plan for relationships is that we are to love others and actively seek to restore and reconcile broken relationships. God has taught us how to make the first step toward loving people.

It may not be easy, but when we learn to love sacrificially as Christ has loved us we have the opportunity to reflect God to others in and through our relationships.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

Let's put this into the context of the Harvard Study. The study put forward a life changing truth, and that is happiness in life is ultimately found in relationships. The story of the Bible brings this more clearly into focus—you were designed for relationship, first and foremost with God and then with others.

Your identity, meaning, purpose, and happiness in life is rooted in restoring your relationship with God. Despite the fact that our own sin has separated us from God, he has made the first step toward reconciling the relationship. He has offered salvation and eternal life to all who believe in his son Jesus. To hear more from Jesus in his own words continue to Day 4.

PERSONAL PROCESSING QUESTIONS

No one is immune to broken relationships. In what ways has your own story been affected by broken relationships?

Everyone has experienced the guilt that comes from doing wrong. What do you normally do when you have hurt others?



DAY 4

JESUS IN HIS OWN WORDS

“I have come that you
might have life and
have it to the full.”

– JESUS

YOU WERE INTRODUCED TO JESUS YESTERDAY.

We looked at how Jesus has both rescued us from the penalty of sin and death, and also how he has reconciled and restored us back to God. Today you will hear from Jesus himself, in his own words.

Jesus came to invite you to reconsider your life, to change your current course, and to follow him. Jesus did not come to invite you to the practice of dead religion, but instead he came to give you full, abundant life. To follow Jesus is to die to your old ways of living and rebuild it on what Jesus says is true. He came to show you a whole new way to live. What does that look like? Loving God and loving people—that is God's purpose and plan for your life.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

Jesus has come to give us rest—but not just any rest—true rest.

The rest our souls crave but cannot find in this world. Jesus puts an end to our ceaseless striving and doing and achieving. Only he can give us what we truly long for, peace with God and rest for our souls.

“Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.’” Matthew 7:37–38

We all thirst. No, not to satisfy our physical thirst, but to satisfy our souls. Life is a never ceasing journey to find the next thing that brings happiness. Jesus is what can truly satisfy your soul.

Satisfaction for our souls is not found in something but in Someone. If you attempt to satisfy your thirst from the things of this world, you will thirst again.

If you turn to Jesus your search will end; you will have found living water for your soul. Jesus invites you to come to him, to drink, and to truly live.

“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?” Matthew 16:25–26

Jesus tells us the honest truth. You can have it all. You can achieve your dreams. You can make the money, have the fame, the house, the car, the dream vacations and still lose your soul. There was once a popular t-shirt that said ‘the man who dies with the most toys still dies’. It’s true, but Jesus gets at something even greater: not only does that man die, but he forfeits his soul.

“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

Jesus is the only way to restore our relationship with God. This statement by Jesus reveals the falsehood of two common beliefs about God and heaven that exist in our world today.

First, let’s examine the belief that all “good” people go to heaven and all “bad” people go to hell. According to Jesus this is not true. Only those who have been reconciled to God have been promised eternal life. Those who die separated from God experience eternity apart from him.

Second is the belief that all religions are basically the same and they all lead their followers to the one true God. It's the idea that all religions are simply different trails leading up the same mountain. God is at the top smiling, ready to explain that we are all just pursuing the same thing. Jesus's statement in John 14:6 makes this idea impossible. There is a single path leading to the one true God and that path is through Jesus, the one who died to reconcile us to God.

"The kingdom of God has come near. Turn away from your sins and believe the good news!"
Mark 1:15

The door to God's kingdom is wide open.



FOR ALL WHO DESIRE TO ENTER JESUS INVITES US TO DO 2 THINGS:

#1 TURN AWAY FROM OUR SINS.

Imagine a person on a journey who has stopped following one path and started walking on a new path.

#2 BELIEVE.

Jesus invites you to believe the good news of God's great love for you. God has offered you the gift of new life. It is your choice to receive what God has freely given.

PERSONAL PROCESSING QUESTIONS

If Jesus's words are true what would that mean for your search for happiness and purpose?

What are some of the questions about Jesus you would like to ask?

The background of the image is a photograph of the interior of Antelope Canyon. The walls are made of smooth, undulating sandstone, showing distinct horizontal layers and a warm, orange-red color palette. Light enters from narrow slits at the top, creating a dramatic play of light and shadow that highlights the textures of the rock. The overall atmosphere is ethereal and majestic.

DAY 5

LIFE'S MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

"But what about you?"
he asked. "Who do
you say I am?"

– JESUS

JESUS WAS MASTERFUL AT ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS.

In the story of Jesus's life written by Mark there is a fascinating interaction between Jesus and his disciples. Jesus was speaking with the men who were following him and he first asked them a general question, "Who do the people say that I am?" His followers told him that the people thought he was some kind of prophet like John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah.

But then Jesus turned the tables. His desire was not to know in general who the crowds thought he was. He wanted to know who his very own friends and followers understood him to be. And so after they had shared about the debates over his identity among the people, Jesus sharpened the question. He asked them, "But what about you? Who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter, perhaps the most outspoken and confident of Jesus's followers replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Peter was confident he knew exactly who Jesus was. The word Christ was a title that means "the anointed one." Peter recognized Jesus as the one God had chosen to rescue his people and reconcile them back to himself.

What about YOU? Yes, you, the reader. Who is Jesus to you? Like Peter do you recognize him as God's savior offering you life instead of death?

At Catalyst Community Church we believe how you answer this question is the most important decision you will ever make in your life, that any of us will ever make in our lifetime. We do not use these words lightly.

We believe the story of the Bible is true, and that means God has made you to know him and enjoy him. Jesus has provided a way back to God, back to true happiness, and given you a new purpose in life. Will you receive him?



WE WANT TO INVITE YOU TO BEGIN YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TODAY.

Don't wait. We want to encourage you to respond to God's love for you and be reconciled to him.

NEXT STEPS:

#1

I believe Jesus died for my sins. I am ready to ask for his forgiveness and follow him with my life. Let us know of your decision so we can help you grow.

#2

I still have a few questions and would like to talk to someone. Email us at hello@catalystchurch.me.

#3

I would like to visit Catalyst Community Church so I can see and know a little more about what it means to follow Jesus. Plan your visit today.

Scan the QR code to Plan
Your Visit to Catalyst
Community Church



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

to learn more about the Catalyst Community Church family. It would be a great privilege for us to meet you and hear your story!



www.catalystchurch.me

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