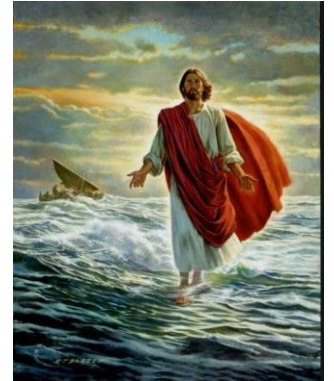


Goal Setting Versus God's Purpose

Having grown up in the business world I am trained to set and attempt to achieve measurable goals. Now that I am in retirement mode I still set goals for the day, week and year. Accomplishing them gives me a sense of achievement leading towards bigger goals in the future. When it comes to considering God's purpose for my life I also slip into a goal setting mindset. I wonder what God has in mind for me that would give purpose to my life as part of His grand plan for my future.

Then, I read an Oswald Chamber's devotion entitled "God's Purpose or Mine?" It altered my understanding of God's purpose for my life. My personal mindset is looking far into the future, wondering where God will place me so that I can accomplish something worthwhile for His kingdom. My thinking was that God's purpose for me was in the future. Chambers said, "We have the idea that God is leading us toward a particular end or a desired goal, but He is not." That's strange. I thought all of life was building on experiences to prepare for some big future task. My focus was on the future for accomplishing my purpose. Humans see everyday life as a process leading towards a goal, where God sees the *process* as the "goal itself." Even though God knows the future, his focus is in the "here and now." His purpose is fulfilled in the present tense, each day of your purposeful life.



The scripture passage of this devotion is based on the account of Jesus walking on water, in full view of His disciples. I thought it was an unusual passage for the topic of God's purpose. What does Jesus walking on water have to do with God's purpose? Picture the scene: The disciples were in the boat, crossing the Sea of Galilee, heading for the "other side," when they saw Jesus walking on the water. The casual reader may miss the point that Jesus wasn't walking anywhere in particular. He was just walking on the sea, with no visible goal in sight. Jesus' goal was for the disciples to see "Him walking on the sea" (Mark 6:49). Watching Jesus walk on the water solidified their understanding that He is the Son of God. It accomplished its purpose of making a lasting impression and provided several teaching lessons.

Chambers assures us, "It is the process, not the outcome, that is glorifying to God." Chambers went on to say, "God's training is for now, not later. ... What people call preparation, God sees as the goal itself." God purposely placed you where you are – today – for today's tasks. *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).*

Live your life day-to-day, relying on God to provide moment-by-moment opportunities to exhibit God's purpose for your life. Sure, there will be moments in the future in which to experience new opportunities to serve Him. The confidence we gain today will help us accomplish future tasks. Just don't ignore that His purpose for your life includes what you do today. Everything you do today can be to glorify God. *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).*

My habit of goal setting for the day has taken on a different dimension. I now look for opportunities in the present day to work alongside God to be a blessing to others. What you do day-to-day glorifies God. There will be more opportunities tomorrow and into the future, but you can be a blessing to others today.

Question: What can you do today to glorify God and be a blessing to others?

Prayer: Dear Lord. We tend to think "big picture" and look towards the future. But, there are things we can do today to further God's purpose in our life by sharing our love with others. Amen.

This devotion is based on My Utmost for His Highest, by Oswald Chambers, the July 28th devotion entitled "God's Purpose or Mine."