

The Purpose of Life



The Love of God (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

The theme I've chosen for this Christmas season is a particularly beautiful and appropriate one: The Love of God.

But first let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write, even if it's only a brief personal note.

Now back to our Christmas theme: The Love of God. What phrase could better express the essence of Christmas than that?

It's my sincere desire for each one of you, my radio listeners, that this Christmas season will be truly blessed and meaningful for you. It is for this reason that I have chosen as my theme: The Love of God. If you truly taste the love of God at this time, then your blessings will not be limited to a few brief hours of carnal pleasure, but they will last on into the New Year that lies ahead and throughout the rest of your life, yes, and beyond that through an endless eternity.

On the other hand, if you go through life without truly knowing God and His love, then it will make no difference how much pleasure or success you may gain in other ways, ultimately you will have lived in vain.

To introduce this theme to you I want to turn to some words that Jesus spoke in prayer to the Father. This is recorded in John chapter 17, verses 1-3. I'm reading these words because they reveal the supreme purpose of life.

> "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus

> Christ, whom you have sent.'" (NIV)

So you see, there is the purpose of life, the real, ultimate, eternal purpose of life stated in those simple words, "knowing God." Knowing God, not just in a general way, knowing God not just through theology, not even just knowing God as revealed in creation as the great Creator. Not even know that we shall meet God one day as we all shall, as Judge, but knowing God as Jesus addressed Him at that moment, as Father. And that is possible only through Jesus Christ, the Son. Only Jesus, the Son, can reveal the Father. No man knows who the Son is, but the Father. And no man knows who the Father is, but the Son and the one to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.

So we are dependent on God, on Jesus Christ, for this precious revelation. That's a tremendous phrase: "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." I believe it's going to take eternal life to know God. I don't believe that's it's possible to know the eternal God fully and as He desires us to know Him, in the brief span of a human life.

But God has made available to us eternal life through Jesus Christ that we may know Him, not merely as Creator, or Judge, but as Father. And within the family of the Father is found this unspeakable Treasure, The Love of God.

Listen to what Paul says in Ephesians chapter 3, verses 14-19:

> "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. [You see there's one family in heaven and on earth, and it all derives it's name from one Father, God the Father. And within this family there is a revelation possible that can never be received outside the family of God. And so Paul goes on to record this wonderful prayer...] I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." (NIV)

So Paul is praying there that we may somehow, by the help of the Holy Spirit and through the revelation granted to us in Christ, may grasp the measures that cannot be measured, "...how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." And then he uses this remarkable phrase which contains a deliberate paradox, "...to know this love that surpasses knowledge." So there is a love that we can know, but never know because it surpasses knowledge. This is the love of God, the Father, in His family through Jesus Christ revealed by the Holy Spirit, revealed in Scripture. A revelation that cannot come in any other way. This is the purpose of life - to know God as Father in this way. If you live your whole life and are successful in every other area, but you miss this revelation, this knowledge of the love of God, ultimately your life will have to be written off as a failure because you will have missed the real purpose of living. You may succeed in your worldly career, you may be academically very proficient, you may become very wealthy, you may be admired and envied by the majority of your neighbors, but you will have missed the one thing that makes life truly worthwhile and meaningful. The one thing that I want to speak to you about at this Season, The Love of God.

I want to turn now for a few moments to the example of the Apostle Paul as one who had realized what mattered most in life, and who bent and shaped his whole life to attain this goal, the knowing of God in Jesus Christ. This is what Paul says in Philippians chapter 3, verses 8 and 9:

> "What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith." (NIV)

So that was his supreme objective in life, knowing Jesus Christ. Knowing Him, not through a righteousness of doing and earning merit points, keeping commandments and rules, but through a revelation, a person to person direct encounter with Jesus Christ. And so he continues in the next few verses, verses 12-14:

> "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in

> Christ Jesus." (NIV)

The goal of knowing God, of finding God's love. And then a little further in the same third chapter of Philippines, Paul paints the sad alternative if we don't make this our aim and our goal in life, if our values are distorted and our priorities are out of order, he says this in Philippians 3:17-19:

> "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things." (NIV)

It seems to me that this is such a clear alternative that's set before us at this season. Are we going to set our mind on earthly things? Are we going to make a god out of our stomach? Are we going to take glory in our shame? Is our ultimate destiny to be destruction? Or are we going to make the wise choice? See the real purpose of life, knowing God revealed in Jesus Christ, knowing God as Father, comprehending a love which cannot be comprehended, coming to know a love which surpasses knowledge, and yet can be revealed by the Holy Spirit, a love that is contained and hidden in the person of Jesus Christ.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing on the relationship between the love of God and the holiness of God.

Radio Program

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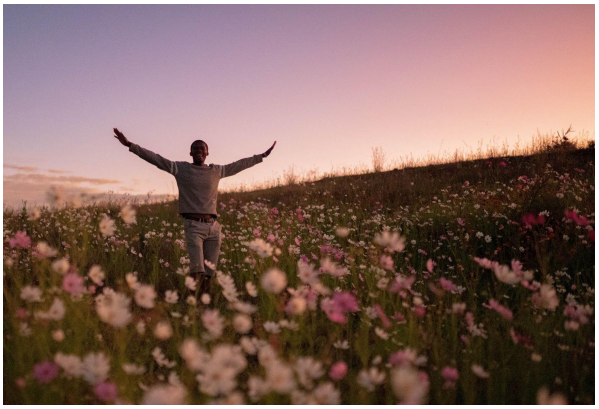

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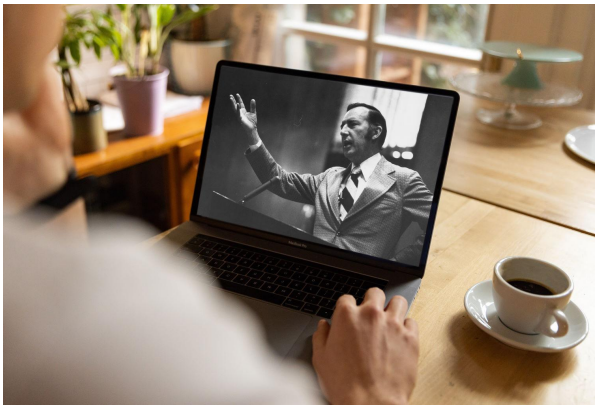

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