



**St. Paul**

**Lutheran Church & Preschool**

*Where living Grace[d] & Families Cross*

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*We offer this guide to help you in your day-to-day reading of Rick Warren's book, What On Earth Am I Here For? This book is a wonderful devotional journey into discipleship and we are happy to offer it to you. The basic truths and questions in this devotional get right at the heart of our relationship with God in Christ, and offer us a deepening journey into discipleship.*

*Pastor Rick Warren communicates in a plain-spoken, easy to understand way. He also writes with some Baptist and Presbyterian overtones, which we as Lutheran Christians do not believe are correct understandings of God's Word. We do not want to get sidetracked from the immense value of this study by differences in belief. Instead we do want you to gain the most from What On Earth Am I Here For? with correct Biblical and Lutheran understanding. Keep in mind that it is healthy to read different perspectives, especially those of other Christians. Doing so calls us to remember and clarify our own beliefs.*

*May God bless your journey, and our church's journey together!*

*~ Pastor Paul Werner*



**A Lutheran Guide  
for your reading  
and understanding of  
Rick Warren's  
What On Earth  
Am I Here For?**

**Week of October 4 – 10, 2020 What On Earth Am I Here For?**

Why am I here? This one question seems common to all humanity. Fortunately, we as Christians know our existence is no accident! You are created by God on purpose. As God's creature, you have value, dignity, and a purpose for your life. The mark we leave on this world in many ways is only a small part of the wonderful purpose for which God made us. Still it is an important one. For the next 40 days you will be on a journey into the heart of that purpose. As we look at the various aspects of that purpose constantly remember that every aspect begins and ends with Christ's cross and resurrection, and the resulting forgiveness, freedom, hope, and heaven He has won for us there.

### **Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup> Day 1: It All Starts with God**

Focus on the idea that we cannot arrive at our life's purpose by focusing on ourselves. We must begin with God. It is only in God that we discover our origin, identity, meaning, purpose, significance, and destiny. God has given you identity in your Baptism. In Baptism when God declares, "You are my son / daughter forever!"

Scripture to consider: (Christ is at the core of our existence and purpose)

**Colossians 1:16-22** <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. <sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

### **Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup> Day 2: You Are Not an Accident**

God created us to serve God's purposes. When God created Adam He gave him the gift of free will, and the freedom to make choices. The fall into sin twisted that around so that left to our own we can choose only evil. However, by the grace of God and the power of His Holy Spirit living in our hearts, we respond to His grace by having a new desire inside – we want to seek his purposes. God, like a parent, encourages us and wants us to choose wisely, but will not force us to choose God's way.

An important point: As Lutherans we believe that God is like the best possible parent. No loving parent would intentionally inflict or harm his/her child. God, however, does allow suffering to impact our lives. Even Jesus was not immune to suffering. We see this in the cross. What the Bible teaches is that God suffers with us, and that God will see us through suffering. This means that faith is not eliminating problems from your life on earth. Instead, through the problems we look forward to heaven where there will be "no death or mourning, or crying, or pain." God actually uses pain and suffering in our lives to refine our character so that we learn to trust more deeply that God is *with* us and working for our good all the time. We can trust that God is with us.

### **Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup> Day 3: What Drives Your Life?**

God's forgiveness is all about being set free from what holds us in bondage. Sin is what separates us from God. The death and resurrection of Jesus has overcome all that separates us from God and holds us captive. Through a Lutheran lens, it is not so much about "preparing for eternity," as helping to bring the Kingdom of God's grace into this world. Like Jesus, as we live out God's purposes here and now, the Kingdom of God becomes real for others. Jesus invites us to begin living in eternity, starting now.

The goal of life is to grow into the likeness of Christ. When Lutherans think about standing before God and accounting for our lives, we picture Jesus standing with us before the Father, interceding on our behalf, claiming us as his sisters and brothers for whom He lived and died. At the same time, we are held accountable for how we chose to live our earthly lives. Do we live selfishly, lazily, or energetically to the glory of God? How have we used our God-given gifts and passion to serve God's purposes? How did our faith lead us to lovingly serve others?

### **Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup> Day 4: Made to Last Forever**

Lutherans emphasize that we are created to serve God here-and-now. We are Kingdom Builders! We continue the work of Jesus. We live in the light of God's love for us in Jesus, and we serve out of gratitude and love. When we realize the love God has for us in Jesus, we begin to live differently. It

might be helpful to substitute “God’s love” for the phrase “light of eternity.” Our motivation is thanksgiving for what God has done, is doing, and will do for us because of His love.

**Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup> Day 5: Seeing Life from God’s View**

Do you see the world as a gift from God to be thankful for? Or do you view your life through the belief that you are here by chance and so you aim to get the most from this world? Is our goal serving or acquiring? Do people look out for you, or are we to take advantage of others? Is it about giving or accumulating? Life as a “test” is a biblical metaphor. Another way to say this is “life often challenges our faith in God, and our trust in God’s goodness.” These times of challenge are opportunities for growth in our faith, if we choose to invite God into them. We always have to choose whose “will” will be done and how we will view what happens to us. Do we invite God into our struggles, and ask God to use them to shape us for God’s purposes? Doubt is not the opposite of faith. Doubt and questioning, and even anger, are integral components of faith. Faith is a relationship with God that is completely honest with Him. This means in honesty we express our doubts, questions, and pains to God, knowing He will not turn away. This honesty is one way God uses life’s hardships and trials to continue our growth as maturing disciples of Jesus.

Life on earth is a trust. This is a very positive Lutheran perspective. In this chapter Warren moves into the theme of judgment. The Bible makes it clear that we will be held accountable. But Lutherans tend to see judgment through the lens of accountability, not fear. The Lutheran perspective is that God’s grace leads us to trust in God’s love (faith), which leads us to respond in acts of loving service. Grace → Faith → Response. A life without a loving response toward God is a life without faith, and a life without faith is void of hope and meaning.

When we think about the maturation process, what Warren calls “tests” we see as “opportunities for growth.” We are growing into the likeness of Christ, which is a process that continues all life long. If, on the other hand, you choose continually not to become like Christ, you are actually being shaped to become more like Satan. There is no standing still. We are continually being shaped slowly to become more godly or more evil. The situations we encounter in life are viewed not so much as “tests,” but as learning and growing experiences.

**Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup> Day 6: Life Is A Temporary Assignment**

This chapter deals with the fact that our lives on earth are brief and transitory. The temporary things of this life like possessions, status, relationships, knowledge, and accomplishments are usually so important to us that they divert us from God and our purpose to serve him and his Kingdom. It might be helpful to translate Rick Warren’s statement, “Your identity is in eternity, and your homeland is heaven,” to mean “The most important thing in life is our relationship with God in Christ and serving him.” As Lutherans, we remember that in Baptism God gives us our identity – we are children of God. In Baptism, God gives us purpose – to love him with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and our neighbor as ourselves. Page 52 – last paragraph – Another perspective is that we feel discontent when we value earthly things. We are content when our hearts value what God values.

**Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup> Day 7: The Reason for Everything**

What is God’s glory? Go back to Genesis. God made everything and it was good. He intends for everything to live in relationship with God and each other and serve God’s purposes. It is a symbiotic relationship, everything created for a purpose and working together to serve that purpose.

Sin is anything and everything that leads us away from God and serving God’s purposes; anything that breaks our relationship with God and/or with each other. God is to be worshipped because of who God is, not because of what God can do for us. God is worthy of our praise, thanksgiving and service. For us, worship is not a spectator event, but an encounter with the living God. God comes TO us in worship. Scripture, Baptism, and Communion are ways God comes to us in worship. We don’t have to go find God or get emotionally excited to meet with Him. We gather to worship to renew our relationship and enjoy God’s presence.

Worship services can be viewed as two way conversations. God shares with us His gifts (the Word, sacraments, and the message of forgiveness in Christ) and we respond by glorifying and praising Him. However, the act of Worship itself is not about what we “get out of it,” but “what we bring to it.” Worship is how we live our lives each day in serving the God whom we love.

### **Week of October 11-17, 2020 Purpose #1 You Were Planned For God’s Pleasure**

This section outlines our relationship with God. For those who are unsure of God’s relationship with them and the events that take place in their lives, the sections on friendship with God and the sections that address the times when we feel distant from God may be particularly helpful. Intentionally incorporating God into what we are doing as individuals and as a church can and often does help things take on a more significant meaning and a more Godly focus even if we are not feeling His presence as strongly as we might like at a the time. Regardless of how busy life gets, when prayer and Godly focus permeate every aspect of life, amazing things can happen. Praise God that whatever our efforts, with our eyes set on Christ and what He has done and is doing for us, God’s Spirit continues to work and bear fruit in our lives.

#### **Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup> Day 8: Planned for God’s Pleasure**

You are a child of God because He made you and through your Baptism He brought you into a relationship to Him as a child of God. You bring pleasure to God like nothing else He has ever created. Life is an act of worship as we bring an awareness of God into all our activities and seek to serve Jesus through them.

#### **Monday, October 12<sup>th</sup> Day 9: What Makes God Smile?**

We are created for relationship with God. Trusting God means you agree that God knows what is best for our lives. Think about the parent/child relationship. Like our own human experience, God doesn’t plan every event that happens. Rather, God walks with us and helps us deal with situations as they occur in our lives. Is there randomness in the world? Many Christians say yes. But God is with us in that randomness. In fact, it is often in chaos or brokenness that we find God creating something new and good.

#### **Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> Day 10: The Heart of Worship**

Lutherans do not use the word “surrender” much. Nevertheless, it lies at the heart of our faith. It is giving up claim to our own lives, what we want, and giving ourselves over to what God wants with us and for us. Lutherans tend to use two other words. First, “contrition” is recognizing “I’ve messed up. I’ve done wrong. I’ve hurt myself and others.” The second word is “repentance.” This is “I’m sorry and I don’t want to do it again.” When we are contrite and repentant we give up (or surrender) our way of living. God’s forgiveness then moves us to want to turn around to live in God’s direction.

When we are created, there is a “true self” that God intended us to be; a self-created in God’s image. God’s image is seen clearest in Jesus. You are created to grow to be more like Jesus, but we are shaped by our culture and the world in which we live. This is the “false self.” Often we talk about wearing masks to keep others from knowing who we truly are. Many think that we can get from the “false self” to the “true self” by willing ourselves to change, through human effort. The Bible indicates that the only way to move from the false self (the old nature) to the true self (new nature) is by surrendering ourselves to God, falling into the hands of the living God. In essence, this is what confession and forgiveness is about – a change in direction. As Luther would say, it is a daily dying and rising in Baptism; dying to our old way of living and rising to live God’s new way. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup> Day 11: Becoming Best Friends with God**

Rick Warren writes: “The key to friendship with God is not changing what you do, but changing your attitude toward what you do.” Awareness of ourselves is the first step in changing our attitudes and the way we respond.

**Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup> Day 12: Developing Your Friendship with God**

For Lutherans, obedience grows out of love for God, not coercion, not fear. God's grace, not guilt, is the right motivation. Parents hope their children will listen to what they say out of respect and love. Obedience grows out of our trusting that our parents -- and our God -- have our best interests at heart, and truly love us no matter what. Why is there pain and suffering in our lives? Lutherans understand the message of the Bible to say that God allows -- not causes -- suffering to come into our lives. God does not cause hurt and pain to come into your life, but He loves you so much that He won't waste a problem if it can help shape you to trust God more.

**Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup> Day 13: Worship That Pleases God**

Focus on the 4 characteristics: (1) accurate -- "in truth;" (2) authentic -- heartfelt/genuine; (3) thoughtful -- engaging the mind; and (4) practical -- a life that reflects love for God. Romans 12:1-2: True worship is offering our lives to God's service, placing God first, last and only in our lives, discerning God's will and then doing it.

**Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> Day 14: When God Seems Distant**

We do not believe that God intentionally tests us with absence. However, there are times when God will seem to us to be absent in our lives. There will be times when our relationship with Him is dry. Similarly, there are times when we feel separated or distant from our spouse or friends, but that doesn't mean that they do not love us or that we're being tested. During these periods we remember that we walk by faith, not by sight. We are people of the WORD. We take God's promise in the Bible and trust what He has promised, even when it is hard to believe because what we see in our life looks the opposite. We trust God even when everything else seems to indicate otherwise. We look to the cross and Jesus' own experiences of feeling abandoned by God. Jesus trusted that God was with him and would ultimately deliver him and vindicate Him.

**Week of October 18-24, 2020 Purpose #2: You Were Formed For God's Family**

**Purpose #2** talks about the importance of our human relationships. This means making others a priority in how we spend our time. Daily tasks should not cause us to lose sight of the people we are called to love and serve. If we are to grow through accountability, we must "do life" together with other Christians. Spending time together allows us to care, share, and be in prayer for one another. Christians are not just a flock of Sunday Christians.

**Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup> Day 15: Formed for God's Family**

From a Lutheran perspective, Baptism is the sacrament of belonging and inclusion. This is God's action, not ours. God initiates. God chooses us. We respond to that choice. Just as we did not choose our parents, but respond to their love, so it is true in our relationship with God. For Martin Luther, Baptism was the primary sacrament. It marks our birth into a life lived in God. It reminds us of God's claim upon our lives and God's desire for us to know the joy of his love. Baptism also reminds us that a life lived in God is a daily dying and rising; dying to living our way or the way of our culture, and rising to live like Christ in God's way. In Baptism God claims us as children, adopts us into the family of God's people, forgives us our sin for turning away from God, gives us His presence through the Holy Spirit living in our hearts, and promises us eternal life. A life of faith begins in the water and Word of Holy Baptism.

**Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> Day 16: What Matters Most**

It's all about love! Being in relationship with others is where we learn to love. Being in relationship with other Christians is essential for growing into spiritual maturity. We cannot do this when separated from the community of God's people. A life of faith is a life lived for others. It is not about "me," it's about how I might serve you. A guiding question might be: How would Jesus respond to or love this person? How does Jesus want me to love? It's a variation on "What Would Jesus Do?"

Scripture to consider:

**Matthew 22:35-39** <sup>35</sup> And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

### **Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup> Day 17: A Place to Belong**

The church is not a building or organization, but a people, a living organism. We exist to carry on the mission of Christ! We are literally the Body of Christ in the world. Christ has no hands or feet or arms or legs or eyes or ears but ours! We need each other in order to carry out the mission Christ has left us. The community of God's people becomes the very place where we get "on the job training" in learning to love and serve one another.

### **Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup> Day 18: Experiencing Life Together**

Small Bible study groups can grow deeper over time in relationship with one another. They can become places to experience the intimacy and support we need for the journey of faith. Notice the qualities that define the community. Christian community gives you the opportunity to know others, and be known; care for others, and be cared for; celebrate others, and be celebrated.

Scripture to consider:

**Acts 2:41-47** <sup>41</sup> So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. <sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

### **Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> Day 19: Cultivating Community**

There are barriers and risks to being in the kind of relationship with others that God wants for you. "Speaking the truth in love" is difficult, but essential. It is sharing how we affect each other, not with the desire to put down or hurt another person, or get what "I want" in the relationship, but for the sake of nurturing and deepening our relationships as meaningful and whole.

### **Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> Day 20: Restoring Broken Fellowship**

Because God blesses our lives and restores our relationship through Jesus, therefore we work to restore our relationships with each other. When relationships are restored, we experience the peace God wishes for us.

How might we be God's blessing to the world as we work for "peace" as described in this chapter? How can we embrace diversity and yet find a sense of unity?

Scripture to consider:

**1 Corinthians 1:3-10** <sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge-<sup>6</sup> even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you-<sup>7</sup> so that

you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>8</sup> who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

**Luke 17:3-4**<sup>3</sup> Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,<sup>4</sup> and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

**Luke 6:36-42**<sup>36</sup> Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.<sup>37</sup> "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;<sup>38</sup> give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."<sup>39</sup> He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?<sup>40</sup> A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.<sup>41</sup> Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?<sup>42</sup> How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

#### **Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> Day 21: Protecting Your Church**

What unifies us? One Lord, one faith, one hope, one Spirit, one baptism, one God and Father of us all. When we focus on personalities, preferences, interpretations, styles, or methods, division always happens. But if we concentrate on loving each other and fulfilling God's purposes, harmony results. Unity not uniformity! We are called to build up, not tear others down. We are called to focus on understanding, not criticizing others.

Scripture to consider:

**Ephesians 4:4-7**<sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—<sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism,<sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.<sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

**Romans 12:1-2** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.<sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

#### **Week of October 25 - 31, 2020 Purpose #3 You Were Created to Become Like Christ**

It is easy to become self-focused in our lives. Society tells us it is all about me and my instant gratification. Yet God's Word tells us our goal is not to focus on ourselves, but instead first on Christ, and then on God's people. Contrary to the message of much of today's "Christianity," Jesus is not there simply to give us what we want or to make us feel good about ourselves on our own terms. Instead, Jesus offers us so much more. By His grace, Christ has placed our feet on the path of discipleship. This path is rarely short or easy. We will face trouble and temptation.

However, with Christ our Savior by our side, transforming us through the power of His Word, together with our fellow believers we can overcome this world and grow as His disciples. Being Christ-like is more than just head knowledge. It is a living breathing attitude.

**Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup> Day 22: Created to Become Like Christ**

Lutherans would understand the goal of the Christian life as growing into greater maturity until we have the mind and heart of Christ. This is not up to us to accomplish by our own choosing or effort. Instead, we know God the Holy Spirit works in you to become more like Jesus. As Luther says in the Third Article of the Creed: “I believe that I cannot by my own effort or understanding believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith. In the same way the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.”

We are all works in progress. We cooperate and make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit and joyfully choose to use the faith practices that God uses to form us. It’s not so much imitation as inhabitation. We pray that the Incarnation we witness in Jesus happens to us. God invades and occupies our lives. We invite God to do so.

**Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup> Day 23: How We Grow**

Pastor Rick Warren, like other Baptists, emphasizes a conscious decision made by the individual. Lutherans emphasize that the whole reason we *WANT* to grow to become more like Jesus is a *response* to God’s *grace*. We respond joyfully and willingly. The motivation is always grace. God initiates. Jesus calls, and we respond. As Warren mentions, we are not working to “earn or deserve” our salvation. That has been won for us by Jesus. But we make conscious choices to grow in our relationship with Christ. Faith practices take intention. Just as we make conscious decisions about what we eat or how much we exercise or study, so we make decisions about praying, reading Scripture, worshipping, using our gift-abilities, inviting others, giving of our time and resources, and serving others. To get better at music, sports or a hobby, it takes practice. That’s the way we are designed. Likewise, practicing our faith helps us mature.

**Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup> Day 24: Transformed by Truth**

As Luther said, the Bible is the cradle in which we discover Christ. The Bible is the Word of God. It reveals God’s character, love and purpose. But the Word of God is most fully known in Jesus, the Word made flesh. The Bible is God’s love letter to us. As we read and reflect on its message, we encounter the living God. Reading, hearing, and ruminating over God’s Word in your mind, is like hanging out with God. You are spending time with God. You are shaped and transformed by who you spend your time with.

**Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup> Day 25: Transformed by Trouble**

Lutherans do not necessarily believe that God has a purpose behind every problem. Our perspective is that God can use every problem/situation to serve God’s ultimate purposes. Why do bad things happen to good people? Pastor Warren gives the sense that God allows suffering or causes it. Lutherans recognize that this is the question Job asks in his book in the Bible, and we give the answer Job received from God. God endured suffering in Jesus, entered into human suffering, and overcome it for us. He still enters into our suffering today.

In this chapter we deal with what is sometimes called “God’s permissive will.” Does God control everything that happens or does God permit it to happen as a matter of human choice or circumstance? Lutherans believe that ultimately God will get what God wants. Nothing can stop God’s work of forgiving and saving people. But God does not manipulate everything that happens. Romans 8:28 indicates that God is working with us to serve God’s ultimate purpose. Philippians 4 would indicate that we should “rejoice and give thanks” NOT FOR everything but IN everything.

**Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup> Day 26: Growing Through Temptation**

This is a good devotion on how to deal with temptation.



**Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> Day 27: Defeating Temptation**

Here are some helpful strategies for dealing with temptation.

**Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup> Day 28: It Takes Time**

This is a good devotion on growing toward maturity. Patience is key.

**Week of November 1-7, 2020 Purpose #4: You Were Shaped For Serving God**

It was no accident that our Savior came into this world in the form of a servant. The humanity which Christ entered into had been created and shaped for service. As we continue the path of discipleship each of us continues to be shaped into a Christ-like servant to God. We learn to serve both our fellow Christians, and those who do not you know the power of Christ's redeeming love. Becoming a servant often begins with intentional study, but also means taking action. A chef who only sits and reads the cookbook hardly lives up to His potential. Thank God that through the power of his Holy Spirit, He gives each of us the gift-abilities and strength we need to serve Him...including those abilities we will discover in us as we live each day with a servant's heart. As we serve, we discover what gifts and qualities we need to ask God for in prayer.

**Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup> Day 29: Accepting Your Assignment**

Lutherans believe that we are saved *from* sin in order to be saved *for* service and the glory of our Heavenly Father. We are created for (1) **ministry** in the church, to build up the Body of Christ, and for (2) **mission** in the world, to help bring in the Kingdom of God as a reality for others. Maturity, is the goal of the Christian life, but it is not an end in and of itself. Maturity leads to ministry.

**Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> Day 30: Shaped for Serving God**

God created us for a purpose – to serve God as we use our gifts and passions to work for the Kingdom. We remember that each day is a gift in which we can use our God-given abilities. Whether we use them to serve God is our choice. (Free will) S.H.A.P.E. is a great model for understanding our giftedness.

**Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> Day 31: Understanding Your Shape**

Each of us is unique. We are called to serve God's Kingdom. If we don't fulfill our calling, others go unfulfilled. If we don't share our gifts or serve in the Body of Christ, we weaken it and it won't function as God intends. And neither will we.

Rick Warren writes that God permits and uses our situations as learning experiences. We can learn from every type of experience, sometimes more from adverse situations than good ones. God does not wish painful experiences in our lives any more than parents wish for their children to suffer. But God uses painful situations to help us learn and trust that God is with us.

**Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> Day 32: Using What God Gave You**

A good development of Gifts. We need to learn to accept ourselves, and our God-given shape.

**Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup> Day 33: How Real Servants Act**

Life offers us "tests." With God, they become opportunities for growth and serving others. There are limits to being available, but no limits in the situations in which we find ourselves. It's a matter of attitude, focus and orientation. Key for Lutherans is Servant attitude – how might I be Christ's servant to you? Lutherans do not believe we serve for reward. Rather, we serve as a means of showing our love for God as we love our neighbor.

We can serve God's purpose wherever we are. Place is not as important as faithfulness.

**Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup> Day 34: Thinking Like a Servant**

Underlying question: What does it mean to have a servant mind and heart? What does it mean for Jesus to be my Lord? Is Jesus the only one I listen to, take my directions from, and seek to honor or please?

**Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup> Day 35: God's Power in Your Weakness**

We learn to accept our limitations. How does our self-perception limit our responding to God? Henri Nouwen writes: we are wounded healers. God uses our brokenness as a way of bringing help to others who experience similar situations.

**Week of November 8-14, 2020 Purpose #5: You Were Made For Mission**

Fulfilling the great commission means serving others in the roles God gives us. Every day involves seeking those roles, and often means recognizing our multiple roles and asking God to help us keep them in balance. Father, Factory Worker, Faithful church member....Mother, Missionary, Mentor to those who learn. We all have roles in which we are called to serve God and others. It is through these roles, God's Spirit works to call others to faith as God's purpose is carried out in our life to His Glory.

**Sunday, November 8<sup>th</sup> Day 36: Made for Mission**

What is my piece of God's dream that I am to work on in order to help bring in the Kingdom of God, the kingdom of love, grace, mercy and justice? Consider the *Via de Cristo* motto: "*Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ.*" The goal of mission is to introduce people to Jesus, not make them members of a church. We introduce people to Jesus by the way we love them in Christ's name. We love them by what we DO and by what we SAY. When they see and experience Christ through us, they will want to know and experience Christ, too.

**Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup> Day 37: Sharing Your Life Message**

This devotional might be uncomfortable for us. How can we become more comfortable sharing our God-story? Most likely we will need to practice. Try it with some friends, or meet someone for coffee from your group. This would be a good opportunity to get people to share their faith stories. It's important for us to share our stories of how God's love has touched our lives. Each of us has a story to tell. Try to express your story of God's love in your life.

**Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> Day 38: Becoming a World-Class Christian**

We are to be mission-minded. God's love is not turned in upon itself, but is outwardly directed. Read Acts 1 and 2. We live under the Great Commission to make disciples in all the world and teach what Jesus has given us. We need to think both globally as well as locally when it comes to mission. Check to see if anyone has served on a mission trip and, if so, get him/her to share the experience.

**Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup> Day 39: Balancing Your Life**

Life is all about balancing priorities, and living out what is most important. This devotion is full of some good practical ideas on how you can make sure the five purposes are at the center of your life.

**Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> Day 40: Living With Purpose**

Develop a purpose statement and commit yourself to it! Say a prayer of thanks to God for this experience of *What On Earth Am I Here For?* Ask God to bear fruit in your life, and in our congregation, for years to come, as we move forward in God's Purposes together.

**Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup> Day 41: The Envy Trap**

Envy truly leads you away from following God's purpose for your unique life. When you celebrate who God uniquely made you to be, then your relationship with God changes from complaining to gratitude. When you celebrate who God uniquely made you to be, then the way you live for God will be unique too. The diversity of ministry will increase. Have you noticed from the way God created the world that He LOVES diversity and variety? Envy truly is a sin and the first step to eradicating envy is confession to God and forgiveness. The reference to Matthew 20, the Parable of the Landowner, at the end of the chapter is more than good advice not to be envious. Jesus' point is that God has the right to be gracious

to all people. He doesn't consider their work to earn His grace. God's grace is so great that He may even seem unreasonable to us. Praise God for that!

**Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> Day 42: The People-Pleaser Trap**

Being set free from people-pleasing is a good conclusion to "What On Earth Am I Here For?" living to please God first and only in your life, circles back to the message of Day 1 "It's All About God." Perhaps you wonder why this chapter mentions the first two Commandments on page 336. You may be aware that while Lutherans consider these "two" Commandments together to be the First Commandment, other Christian denominations number the Ten Commandments differently than we do. They combine what we consider the Ninth and Tenth Commandments into one, "Do not Covet." Live for your "audience of One" – God!

