

SERIES H: Topic 3

Enhance Your Life with a Purpose

You are a gift to the world. How you share yourself is your purpose and the primary source of your self-esteem. You can have a purpose without giving it a thought. A youth who signs up for the military probably doesn't think of it as a purpose, but it is. A teacher who inspires her students and puts her heart and soul into her work has a purpose, whereas a teacher who is just OK has a job.

Often the best purpose is the one that comes to you naturally or that you are best suited for. If you cause someone to benefit by the way you listen or advise them, being a good friend may be the purpose you were meant to have.

> **Your purpose is one of the things that makes you the proudest. It is one of the first things people say about you when they describe you to others.**

You add meaning to your life and give it direction when you have a purpose.

A popular definition of a purpose is **to give of yourself to a cause that is greater than you.**

About helping others, Muhammad Ali commented, **"Service to God is the rent we pay for our room in the hereafter."**

Mahatma Gandhi told us to **"Be the change you want to see in the world."**

A purpose is not intended to drive you toward accomplishments, but it can help you make better use of your time. When you have a tragedy in your world, working on your purpose is a good way to work through the pain, to heal and to keep from wallowing in your misfortune. Personal tragedies have caused many people to find cures, get legislation passed, raise money, organize support groups or strive to prevent similar tragedies in other families. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is such a result, as is Megan's Law, which alerts the public when a child is missing or abducted.

Many who have become involved with a cause have grown along with it. The cause has made them keep striving when they could have leveled out. Many of their talents and gifts would have gone undiscovered were it not for their cause.

It's never too late to find a purpose. While a man convicted of murder awaited his sentence in court, he grabbed the bailiff's gun and killed the bailiff and two others. Then he hijacked a car and killed its owner. When the car ran out of gas, he broke into a nearby house, where the lady inside talked to him about a book she had just read, Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life*. Realizing his life could still have a purpose (keeping others from making the same mistakes he did), he surrendered to police.

To make the best use of our time on earth, we have to make good use of all we have. When we keep our minds fully engaged and our bodies fit, we are likely to be rewarded with longer and better lives.

By making computer software usable, Bill Gates made one of the greatest contributions to mankind. Surely that was satisfying to him as it was unfolding, but when he was done, it was no longer enough. To continue to be satisfied, he created a foundation and funded it with billions of dollars to help individuals for generations to come.

> **The good we have already done is not as satisfying as the good we are in the process of doing. When our purpose is to use our time and talent as best we can, our work is never done.**



ASK YOURSELF

Whose purpose has benefited my life most?

How can I add meaning to my life?

In one sentence, what is my purpose?