

FINDING YOUR GOD INTENDED PURPOSE FOR LIFE

“OUR INCURABLE OLD NATURE”

The bible does not paint a pretty picture of our old nature, the sinful nature we were born with that we inherited from our parents, which they inherited from their parents. This passing on of the sinful nature in every generation goes back to the first man and woman who took a step of disobedience to God and opened the door to all the evil that is in the world today. This evil found a place in each one of our hearts and is a powerful influence to please and gratify ourselves instead of living for the glory of God.

Let's look at some scriptures that speak about this old sinful nature. Way back in Noah's time this is what God had to say about the human race, Genesis 6:5,6, :The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth and his heart was greatly troubled.”

Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”

Paul gives a good description of the old nature in Ephesians 2:3, “All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following it's desires and thoughts.”

Paul uses the word, “flesh” to mean the old sinful nature. It has, cravings (strong desires and longings), desires (things you want for yourself) and thoughts. (imagination that do not honour or please God) Romans 8:8, says, “Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.” This means that it is impossible for the flesh, our old sinful nature, to please God. Why is that? Because it is locked into totally pleasing self. The old nature doesn't only do what we call bad things or horrible things, it can do what we call nice things, good things, even kind things but none of them please God. You may say, “Why is that? Doesn't God want us to do good and kind things?” Yes he does but when the old nature does them they are all done to please and gratify self, it is because it gets satisfaction from it's never done to glorify God, never done to please God because it can't.

The old nature can do good things to try and earn God's approval that it might go to heaven one day. It can even do lots of religious things but they are all done to save itself, never for the glory of God. It is totally incapable of doing anything for the glory of God and the sooner we learn that the better Christians we will become. Listen to the apostle Paul sharing his experience with his own old nature.

Romans 7:14-25, “We know that the law is spiritual (God's law) but I am unspiritual sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree the law is good (God's law)

As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know good itself does not dwell in me, that is, my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law (power) at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law (power) at work in me, waging war against law of my mind (my thoughts and knowledge of right and wrong) and making me a prisoner of the law (power) of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Paul seems to me to be struggling with his words as he remembers the struggle he had, had with his old sinful nature. Things he knew were wrong he felt powerless to stop himself doing. Sometimes the old nature can come like a flood and sweep us away into some sin we know is wrong but we cannot seem to help ourselves. We can feel bad afterwards, we can feel guilty, we can feel that we have let the Lord down and like Paul we can cry out, "What a wretched person I am, who will rescue me?" Finally he finds the answer, "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Christ our Lord!" The answer is through Jesus who as a free gift gives us the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the power of the old nature. In our next lecture I want to more into this.

Let me finish with an illustration. Imagine you inherited an old beaten up unreliable car that never got you anywhere because it kept breaking down. It would splutter and start and then stop. Friends would try and help to get it started by pushing it but all it would do is splutter and stop. There were places you should be going to but your car was so unreliable that you never got there. This is a picture of our old sinful nature that we inherited, a total wreck.

But suppose you were offered the gift of a brand new car that would take you to all the places you should be going to, cause you to keep all the appointments you were supposed to keep and all you had to do was to keep the petrol tank full and the car regularly serviced.

That is a picture of the power of the Holy Spirit working in your life. Would you not be foolish to refuse the gift. If you feel a strong attachment to your old car and are not willing to give it up then you will end up getting nowhere. If you accept the gift of the new car and start cooperating with it you will go places, but if you miss your old car and go back to it you will find it hasn't changed a bit, it is still as bad as ever and it will result in you going nowhere.

GOING NOWHERE



THE OLD NATURE IS LIKE AN INHERITED OLD BROKEN DOWN CAR

GOING PLACES !



THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LIKE A FREE GIFT OF A NEW CAR.
THE OLD CAR, JUST LIKE THE OLD NATURE, IS BEYOND REPAIR.

**GOD CALLS US TO LIVE OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE
IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

FRANK HUTCHINSON