

POWER OF PRAISE

by: Liz Wahl Andre'

“Perishing Without a Purpose”

Multitudes have questioned the reason for their existence throughout the ages, “Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life?” King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, summed up the answer to the quest for significance: “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). There is a longing deep within the soul of man to leave his mark in the world and to know that his life counted for something. As only one person in a vast sea of humanity, it is easy to feel small and insignificant. As children, we were (hopefully) cushioned from the knowledge of evil in the world. Security in our parents' love, hope, naivete' and idealism fostered an enthusiastic zest for life. As we grew up and realized the danger in the world, oftentimes a fatalistic hopelessness overtook us as we tried to reason the cause of suffering. Armed with the partial knowledge that we are not in control, many have vowed to “eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die.” A reckless pursuit of pleasure has left many disillusioned with their lives when they realize that “stuff” does not satisfy. King Solomon had great wealth, power, wisdom, horses, and a harem of wives that pulled his heart away from God. He withheld no pleasure or luxury from himself. One of his final statements resounds a haunting truth for those who seek meaning apart from God's purpose: “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “All is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 12: 8).

Without a revelation of Who God is and His purpose for humanity, the people cast off all restraint. If we live a few years, die and that is the end, why not adopt the philosophy, “If it feels good, do it!” Why not have multiple sexual partners, cheat and steal, acquire a veritable stockpile of possessions while the needy go hungry, drink, drug and gamble ourselves into an early grave? If we “only go around once, go for the gusto!” It's a catchy motto for selling beer, but it doesn't meet the greatest need of the human heart.

The greatest need of the human heart is to be forgiven and saved, reconciled to our Creator through His Son, Jesus Christ. Scripture declares that there is no peace for the wicked. Apart from a saving faith in Jesus Christ, all of humanity is wicked before a Holy God. God has set before us two paths: one leads to eternal life and one leads to death. Choosing our own way leads

to despair, destruction and, sometimes, suicide: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end of it is death” (Proverbs 16:25). It is no wonder that Pastor Rick Warren’s book, “The Purpose Driven Life,” has become an international, blockbuster bestseller. The subject speaks to the yearning in everyone’s heart to know their purpose and to be loved unconditionally.

God creates the purpose and then the man to fulfill it. Although Jesus is the Creator and is not a created Being, His purpose existed before His earthly visitation: “For this purpose was the Son of God manifest, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3: 8). Jesus is called the “Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.” God knew that when He created mankind, man would choose his own way and depart from Him. He knew that He would need to become a Man to die for our sins. Yet God chose to create us and love us in spite of this foreknowledge. Because of His love for us, He said “Yes” to His purpose – dying on a rough cross for the sins of the world. What a love! What a Savior!

Dear Reader, God has created you for a special purpose in this world. The most important purpose is to bring pleasure to God. Our faith and desire to know Him brings Him glory, and that is when we will discover our purpose. God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; and I ordained you to be a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1: 5). There is a destiny that awaits to be fulfilled, and a legacy to leave behind that will follow us into heaven when we receive our reward. Jesus came to give us abundant life; that life comes from knowing Him, and knowing that we are living in the center of His will.

“For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29: 11).

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).