

FIND YOUR PURPOSE

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

# MAKE GOD GREAT AGAIN



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

**Why am I here?** Have you ever asked that question? Why am I here? If you haven't you should. If you have, you've maybe got a blank where an answer should be. Or maybe you've had lots of answers which you've rubbed out and replaced and you're not sure if your present answer is the right one. Or maybe you've got the completely wrong answer.

Our answer to this question usually results in a picture in our head about what life is all about. As Rick Warren put it in *The Purpose Driven Life*, "The way you *view* your life determines how you *live* your life." Our metaphor of life determines our purpose, expectations, values, relationships, goals, priorities, words, acts, etc. Warren gives some examples, and I've added a few of my own. Think of how each of these *pictures* of life changes our *view* of life and the way we *live* our life.

- Life is a **circus**: I'm here for entertainment.
- Life is a **bungee** jump: I'm here for thrills.
- Life is a **minefield**: I'm here to avoid life blowing up in my face.
- Life is a **puzzle**: I'm here but I have no idea why.
- Life is a **carousel**: I'm here for nothing but just same-old, same-old, round and round.
- Life is a **marathon**: I'm here to endure and persevere.
- Life is a **competition**: I'm here to win and beat everyone else.
- Life is a **party**: I'm here for the fun and games.
- Life is a **beach**: I'm here for maximum leisure time and minimal work.
- Life is a **bank**: I'm here to get more money, spend more money, invest more money.
- Life is a **workshop**: I'm here to work as hard as I can for as long as I can.
- Life is **Instagram**: I'm here for as many likes and followers as I can get.

These are worldly pictures of life that will have worldly results in our lives because they are worldly answers to the question "Why am I here?" What's the biblical view of life? What does God want our view of life to be? How does God want us to answer "**Why am I here?**"

## BACKGROUND

In the first sermon of this series we started with God's purpose because we will never find our personal purpose unless we discover and submit to God's purpose. We discovered that God's purpose is his glory which he primarily achieves through grace-and-truth filled salvation of sinners. He glorifies himself in grace-and-truth filled relationships. He makes himself great again in grace-and-truth filled relationships.



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# WE GLORIFY GOD IN GRACE-AND-TRUTH FILLED RELATIONSHIPS

If God glorifies himself in grace-and truth filled relationships, then we might expect to find that we glorify God in grace-and-truth filled relationships too. That's exactly what we find in 1 Corinthians 10:23-33. We glorify God in grace-and truth filled relationships with others. That's how we make God great again.

Just to be clear, it's not that God ever ceased to be great or that his greatness has ever faded. No, his glory is always infinitely great. However, his glory can be hidden, obscured, unseen, or unappreciated. Think of a theater, in which the star actor is on stage but behind the curtain. The actor is still the same superstar but the curtain hides him. Or the actor can be on stage with the curtain pulled back but there's no spotlight on him and therefore his star qualities are obscured. Or the actor can be on stage, with the curtain pulled back, and the spotlight on him, but there are people in the audience distracting everyone so that the star's abilities go unseen and unappreciated. In all these scenarios, the actor is still a superstar, but his star qualities are hidden, obscured, unseen, or unappreciated. Similarly, God's glory is always the same, but it can be hidden, obscured, unseen, or unappreciated. We make God great again by unveiling, spotlighting, seeing, and appreciating God's glory. And we do that through grace-and-truth filled relationships.

## Pursue the good of others (23-33)

The Corinthian church was in really bad relational shape. The Corinthians' relationships with each other were such a mess that God's glory was hidden, obscured, unseen, and unappreciated. One of the areas in which Paul saw major problems was the way they made decisions in the "gray areas" of the Christian life.

One of the gray areas for the Corinthian Christians was whether Christians could eat food offered to idols. Idolatry was not a gray area, but a black-and-white truth area. It was clearly wrong and forbidden (14). That truth must not be sacrificed. But what about the food offered to idols in idol temples? Could Christians eat that meat when it was sold afterwards in the market? Some Christians said yes, and some said no. The "yes" group didn't care about how their "yes" impacted the "no" group and the "no" group wanted to impose their "no" on the "yes" group. Paul's opinion was that it was a gray area that Christians could agree to disagree on. He offered them six criteria to help them navigate this relational challenge in a grace-and-truth filled way.

Before we look at these questions, let's bring it into the modern world. A similar question arises over how we use social media. Obviously some uses of social media are sinful and wrong (pornography, hook-up apps, gambling), but there are gray areas over what we should post and what posts we should follow. The questions Paul proposes are therefore helpful in our world too,

- **Will this help or harm others? (23a)**
- **Will this build up or break down others? (23b)**
- **Will this do good or do bad to others? (24)**
- **Will this strengthen or weaken the conscience of others? (25-30)**
- **Does this put an obstacle in the way of faith? (32)**
- **Does this help people to be saved? (33)**

Notice that where truth is not at stake, the underlying principle is "grace." Grace meant putting the interests of others first. Grace meant dealing with people not as they deserve but in mercy. Grace meant putting the salvation of others before personal comfort. Grace meant forgoing something legitimate if it hurt someone else's conscience. Grace meant pursuing others good before our own. Grace meant sacrificing self but never sacrificing the truth. **NB:** Grace does not mean there are no consequences for sin, as the God of all grace also disciplines his erring children and disciples.

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## Pursue the Glory of God (31)

In the middle of proposing these six criteria, Paul says, "**So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God**" (31). He directly connects the pursuit of God's glory with the pursuit of others' good. In other words, we glorify God in grace-and-truth filled relationships. That's why we are here. We are here to make God great again and the primary way we do that is in grace-and-truth filled relationships. Just as God glorifies himself in grace-and-truth filled relationships, so we glorify God in grace-and-truth filled relationships. That's our number one purpose in life. It's not work, money, marriage, fun, pleasure, power, etc. It's God's glory in grace-and-truth filled relationships. We are to reflect God's grace and truth in our relationships. Whether we are eating and drinking, not eating and drinking, or whatever we are doing, all our focus is on glorifying God in grace-and-truth filled relationships. We make God great again and so fulfill our purpose by making God great again in grace-and-truth filled relationships. Grace-and-truth filled relationships make God great again by unveiling, spotlighting, seeing, and appreciating God's glory.

There's another Bible passage which parallels this one. **And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him** (Colossians 3:17). It's very similar language to 1 Corinthians 10:31. It's about glorifying God in whatever we do. But again, look at the context. Verses 8-16 and 18-22 are all about grace-and-truth filled relationships. God has chosen relationships as the primary place in which we glorify him.

### CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

How you can unveil, spotlight, see, and appreciate God's glory in the following relationships?

- Your parents (Eph. 6:1-3).
- Your children (Eph. 6:4).
- Your spouse (Eph. 5:22-33).
- Your siblings (1 John 3:17-18).
- Your friends (Prov. 18:24).
- Your enemies (Matt. 5:43-48).
- Your neighbors (Mark 12:31).
- Your workplace (Eph. 6:5-9).
- Your church family (Eph. 4:15-16).

In each of these relationships are you (1) Sharing the Gospel? (2) Putting others good first? (3) Sacrificing yourself in the service of others? (4) Resolving conflict? (5) Speaking the truth in love?

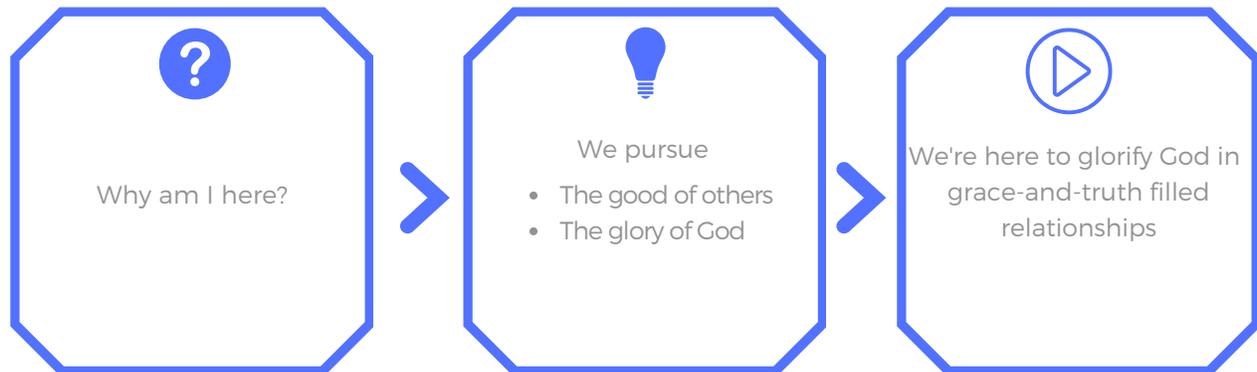
WE MAKE GOD GREAT AGAIN  
BY MAKING OTHERS GREAT AGAIN



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



## SUMMARY



## A NEW CHAPTER

**Jesus made God great again.** "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He did this perfectly and constantly in grace-and-truth filled relationships. He made God great again not only as the perfect model for his followers but the perfect Savior for his trusters.

**How can you make God great again?** Think of one relationship in which God's glory is being hidden, obscured, unseen, and unappreciated. Take grace-and-truth filled steps to unveil, spotlight, see, and appreciate God's glory. In doing so, you will fulfill your primary purpose.

**Prayer.** Glorious God of grace and truth, help me to unveil, spotlight, see, appreciate, and show your grace-and-truth filled glory in all my relationships.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your "picture" of life?
2. How would you have answered the question "Why am I here?" before this sermon?
3. How can you show God's glory in grace-and-truth filled relationships?
4. How can you help others unveil, spotlight, see, and appreciate God's glory?
5. In what relationships did Jesus show God's grace-and-truth filled glory?
6. Name one relationship you will work on and how you will do it?

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