

How To Find Out Who We Really Are

A man on a mission

Acts 20-21

Paul's motivation:

A love for his _____.

A love for the _____.

Paul's understanding:

Things are about to go well for the _____, not _____.

How do we find God's will for ourselves?

Acts 21:1-14, John 16:33, James 1:1-4, Psalm 139, Jeremiah 1:5-8, Ephesians 2:10

We will never know who we really are until:

We know _____ we really are.

We know why we are really _____.

We can lose who we really are when:

We are more concerned with following _____ than _____.

We pursue _____ or _____ over _____.

How To Find Out Who We Really Are

A man on a mission

Acts 20-21

Paul's motivation:

A love for his **PEOPLE**.

A love for the **GOSPEL**.

Paul's understanding:

Things are about to go well for the **KINGDOM**, not **HIMSELF**.

How do we find God's will for ourselves?

Acts 21:1-14, John 16:33, James 1:1-4, Psalm 139, Jeremiah 1:5-8, Ephesians 2:10

We will never know who we really are until:

We know **WHOSE** we really are.

We know why we are really **HERE**.

We can lose who we really are when:

We are more concerned with following **CHRISTIANS** than **CHRIST**.

We pursue **SUCCESS** or **COMFORT** over **OBEDIENCE**.

Food for Thought
For the week of January 10, 2021
(Questions and Scriptures for further study & discussion)

1. This weekend, Chris explained that because Paul knew his purpose, he was able to stay the course to Jerusalem even when others told him not to go. In Acts 20:24, Paul's reason for going, despite the suffering that awaited him, was to finish the race of sharing the gospel.

Acts 20:24 New International Version (NIV)

²⁴ However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.

Years later, in 2 Timothy, which is believed to be the final letter Paul ever wrote, he declared he had finished this race, doing what he set out to do (4:7). We are going to take a deeper look at parts of this final letter from Paul, written from prison at the end of his life and mission. As you read the following verses, underline any words or phrases that point to a sense of purpose.

2 Timothy 4:7 New International Version (NIV)

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Timothy 1:8-12 New International Version (NIV)

⁸ So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. ⁹ He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹ And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹² That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

2 Timothy 2:3-10 New International Version (NIV)

³ Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. ⁵ Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. ⁶ The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. ⁷ Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. ⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, ⁹ for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. ¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

Chris described "purpose" as knowing whose we are and why we are here. How do you see this idea reinforced in the words you underlined in the verses above?

How do you think Paul's perspective in these verses may have helped him "finish the race"?

What are some reasons Paul gave for enduring the suffering he faced?

2. In the same way that Paul's understanding of who he was and what he was called to do helped him finish the race, defining our own purpose can help us do the same. This can be summarized in a life purpose or personal mission statement we remember and repeat throughout our lives.

When it comes to understanding your personal mission, a good place to start is with identifying the qualities and experiences that are unique to you. A helpful acronym for discovering how you are specifically equipped to make an impact for the kingdom of God is S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experiences). Answer the questions below to help you write out a personal mission statement of your own.

- **Spiritual Gifts:** What are your spiritual gifts?

- **Heart:** What are your passions or interests? What makes you come alive?

- **Abilities:** What are your talents and skills?

- **Personality:** How would you describe your personality?

- **Experiences:** Are there any key experiences that have grown your faith? Where or how has God used you in the past to help others know Jesus better?

Paul said his only aim was to complete the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace (Acts 20:24). This aim was a driving force for why he did the things he did for the kingdom of God. In a few words, how would you describe what your "aim" is in living the Christian life?

How do you think your S.H.A.P.E. might help you accomplish this "aim"?

Using your answers from the above questions, write out a personal mission statement in one sentence.

If you would like to take a deeper dive into understanding your unique mission and God's purpose in your life, here are some additional resources:

- S.H.A.P.E. Assessment: freeshapetest.com
- Chazown (the Hebrew word for vision) videos from Craig Groeschel: life.church/chazown
- *Chazown* book by Craig Groeschel: amazon.com/Chazown-Define-Vision-Passion-Purpose/dp/1601423136