

The answer to the meaning of life is found in the One who created it, not in the one who was created. So what is the meaning of life? Whoever created your origin and determines your destiny is the One who decides the meaning of life. John 17:3 says, “And this is **eternal life**, that they **know you**, the only true God, **and** Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

The meaning of life is to give God the highest glory or honor due to Him! Glorify God by being what we were created to be and doing what we were created to do. This gives God, the author of life the highest glory. It’s being conformed into the image of God—Jesus Christ. Rom 8:29 says, “*For those God foreknew he also predestined to **be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*”

Virtues of the Christian Faith

1. **Love:** Unconditional/sacrificial concern/loyalty for the well-being of others.

Love is a choice. Do whatever is the highest good for the other person. Don’t decide based on what is the **nicest** thing, but the **necessary** thing. Don’t cast your pearls among swine. Don’t waste your time and resources on people that **don’t want to listen**. Love them. Respect them. Draw them to Jesus.

Check in on them from time to time, but don’t let them **take advantage of you**. Don’t enable them. Weep over them, hoping they will change. Never give up on people. Never. God hasn’t given up on you and never will.

2. **Joy:** Deep, internal godly gladness, often externally expressed by rejoicing. Joy comes from doing what you think would please Jesus. Even if you were betrayed—you trusted someone and they let you down. Congratulations, you are now a member of “The Jesus’ Club.” **Our security is in the Savior not the situation.** OUR GOAL—To experience the Love of God in ways that grow us!

3. **Peace:** Absence of tension/conflict and deep assurance of God’s presence.

There is no joy without peace. Peace with God, others and yourself. Peace is tied into the **presence** of God not the **presents** from man. It’s God-made not man-made. We were made by God and for God and until we accept and believe that, life will never make sense and true peace will never be achieved.

4. **Patience:** Longsuffering within trials **without complaining or getting angry.**

Why is it that we never have to teach our kids to complain, but we do have to teach them to be thankful? Because being thankful is not natural, complaining is!

Patience is the ability to not allow the pain of hurt, fear, frustration or injustice get to you! It’s already on the cross, don’t try take it off! False patience is just resentment kept under control. Peace is the result of being patient, knowing that your identity is in holiness not happiness. “Be holy for I am holy!” (ref.?) If you complain a lot, then you’re not very patient>>you’re not loving!

5. **Kindness:** Compassion in action. Benevolent friendliness in words/deeds.

The most beautiful people in the world are the kindest ones. There is something about kindest that touches the heart of every human being. It’s always looking for a way to make life more comfortable, successful, and joyful for someone else.

6. **Goodness:** Righteousness in action. Choosing and following moral good.

It involves doing what is right and is a summation of His divine nature and character. It’s making the right choices and then **following through** with them. Every other virtue is connected to and gets its instructions from this one.

7. **Faithfulness:** Reliable, steadfast, unwavering, remaining true to God’s Word and calling-- keeping promises and persevering in the midst of trials; can be trusted.

Faithfulness is focused and driven by principle and purpose and resists anything—trial, temptation or test that would distract from getting the job done that was promised. It has a way of getting its satisfaction from doing little things for the right reasons, purpose and in the right way all for the glory of God.

8. **Gentleness:** Calm and non-threatening; sensitivity and tenderness in treating others. Humility and thankfulness toward God, and polite, restrained behavior toward others. Meekness (not weakness)—strength under God’s control.

Gentleness respects the fragility and the value in the other person, making them feel secure and special.

9. **Self-Control:** Surrendering control of our lives to the Holy Spirit in order to overcome wrong desires and behaviors-- being in the world not of the world.

Getting the boat into the water without getting the water into the boat. Many leaders have forgotten this important concept. I Peter 1: 5-7: “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.” Knowledge brings influence and influence produces results—both good and bad. Be careful. You will be held accountable!

10. **Forgiveness:** To pardon or remove guilt, removing our need to get revenge. It means graciously and generously canceling a debt. Is there any sin that hasn't been nailed on the cross, having the potential of bringing salvation to all? Then why are you trying to take it off through unforgiveness? We forgive, however, not because they are saved, but because we are. God feels more pain than you do for what they did to him and yet dies for them. Rom 5:8 Aren't we supposed to be like him? Unforgiveness is one of those vices that erodes your joy from the inside out. The saddest people on **earth** are the ones that continue to carry the **dirt**—the dirt from others. Stop trying to take the place of God-- His wrath using your imperfect justice. "Vengeance is mine," says the Lord!

11. **Perseverance:** It's a continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition. To **follow Jesus**, even when **He leads us** to and through harrowing times. We **cling to God** because **He holds us** firmly in His hands. John 10:28; Deut 33:27 God often says "be strong and courageous and do not fear." Not giving up is achieved with both hands on the plow and both feet on the ground pushing ahead, knowing that God created both the body and the horse to push and pull it, and gives the strength to move it. It keeps its eyes on the **supernatural** and does what it can in the natural. It resists laziness.

Do you want to know what heaven will be like? Here it is! Now all we need is to see it in living color. May God help us all to start living in it by His power.

Working it Out:

1. Which Fruit of the Spirit do you feel you need to work on the most? Explain.
2. What steps are you going to take to see it fulfilled in your life? Review message
3. Being a disciple is **knowing** Jesus, **growing** more like Jesus, and **going** for Jesus, serving others and making disciples. How does improving your character help you become better at doing any or all of these? Be specific.
4. What would you say to someone who really wants to grow in their faith, but doesn't know where to start? What advice would you give them?
5. Kindness challenge: Do one kind thing for someone every day for the next 40 days. For example: Text a word of encouragement; have a meal; Pray w/ them; offer to babysit free of charge; run an errand...; witness to a friend, flowers, etc.
6. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: The hardest part about being a Christian is succeeding at living out your theology. Truth shows up in character.
7. What does it take to walk by the Spirit of God? Three things. See James 4:6-8

The Nature and Work of the H.O.L.Y. S.P.I.R.I.T.

He is God!-- Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God...
1 Cor 2:10-12 (see 2 Peter 1:21; Psalm 139:7,8)

Q: Have you surrendered your life to the Lordship of Christ? Are you serving two masters? What keeps you from being solely loyal to God?

Offers gifts-- All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. 1 Cor 12: 4, 7,11

Q: Do you know your spiritual gifts? How can you better use them for God's glory? Pray to God to show you them and then step out and try them ☺!

Leads us-- Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness. Luke 4:1... because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Romans 8:14

Q: Ask God to lead you in His direction. What keeps you from stepping out in faith? How do you get direction from God? How do you "hear" His voice?

Your counselor-- When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. John 15:26 (see Jn 14:16- Comforter; Romans 5:5)

Q: Study the word of God to hear from the Spirit of God. Do you have a regular time in the Word? How has this "Helper" helped you in the past?

S ends us-- While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Acts 13:2; Sealed in Him w/ the Holy Spirit Eph 1:13

Q: Where is God leading you? Has God revealed a burning desire in your heart to live for something that will far outlive your life? Spend time in prayer and fasting seeking God's perfect will for you to make your maximum impact.

P owers us-- But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (...by my Spirit Zech 4:6)

Q: To whom are you sharing your faith with? How are you preaching the Gospel and making disciples? What fears do you have in sharing your faith?

I nspires us-- The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life. Job 33:4 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness... Gen 1:26 . (see Gen 1:2; Exodus 31:1-5)

Q: What creative ministry does God want to do in your life? Ask him to "breathe" new life on you! What does it mean to be "made in His image."

R edeems us—sanctification-- When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. Jn 16:8 ... being transformed into His image...from the Spirit 2 Cor 3:18; 5:17

Q: Are there any specific areas of your life that are NOT submitted to the Holy Spirit? Confess them to God and one another.

I ndwells us-- Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 1 Cor 3:16; Jn 14:17; Romans 8:16

Q: Are there any bad habits in your life that are poisoning your body? Physical, mental (media)? What good habits can you start to replace the bad ones?

T eaches us--But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Jn 14:26 All Scripture... 2Tim 3:16

Q: Do you have a regular time to memorize Scripture--to meditate on it so He can remind you of it ? What method to you use to memorize?