



**How Do You Build Something That Will Last?  
(Find Your Purpose)  
Dr. Ricky Temple**

**Date: June 14, 2026**

**Main Text: Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)**

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

**Quarterly Themes for 2026**

1. Be Honest
2. Be Aware of Blind Spots
3. Be Really Free (John 8:32)
4. Be Aware of Your Level (Romans 12:3)

**June 2026 Series Summary: “Get Free for Real”**

**Part 1: Gain Control (Am I managing my life or is my life managing me?)**

**Text: Matthew 16:24:** “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me”

**Part 2: Find your Purpose (Why Am I Here?)**

**Text: Genesis 2:15:** “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

**Part 3: Becoming Fruitful (Am I producing what God designed as my full potential?)**

**Text: John 15:8** “This is to my father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

**Part 4: Always Strive to Progress (Am I Still Moving Forward?)**

**Text: Philippians 3:13–14** “...Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal...”

**Opening Statement:**

One of the greatest questions a person can ask is: **What am I supposed to be doing with my life?** Many people spend years searching for purpose through relationships, careers, accomplishments, possessions, education, or success. Yet before you were born, before you chose a career, before you got married, and before you had children, God already had a purpose and a plan for your life. Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that purpose does not begin with us; it begins

with God. When God says, “*I know the plans I have for you,*” He is reminding us that our lives are not accidents and our futures are not random. God had a purpose for us before we understood it ourselves. Our responsibility is not to invent purpose but to discover it, embrace it, and align our lives with the plans God has already established. The tragedy of life is not failing; the tragedy is spending years succeeding at something God never called us to do.

### **Adam and Eve’s Evolving Purpose**

1. He started out alone.
2. He evolved into a relationship (marriage).
3. They evolved into work and cultivating their harvest.
4. They evolved into parents.

**Note: Children came last.**

### **Questions:**

1. How well do you function alone in your purpose?
2. How well do you function with a spouse in your purpose?
3. How well do you both function with work in your purpose?
4. How well do you function as parents in your purpose?

## **I. The Challenge of Functioning Alone**

### **The Reality of Life and Time**

Consider the average American woman. If she marries at approximately **29 years old** and lives to approximately **81 years old**, she will spend about **29 years alone before marriage**, which is approximately **36% of her life**. If she outlives her husband by five to six years, she may spend a total of approximately **34–35 years of her life alone**.<sup>1 2</sup>

Consider the average American man. If he marries at approximately **30 years old** and lives to approximately **76 years old**, he will spend about **30 years alone before marriage**, which is approximately **39% of his life**.<sup>1 2</sup>

## The Point

The average woman may spend approximately 34–35 years of her life alone, and the average man may spend approximately 30 years alone. That means many people will spend one-third to nearly one-half of their lives by themselves before marriage, after marriage, or both. Yet many people never learn who they are until they are connected to someone else. Adam's first assignment was not to be a husband, a father, or even a worker. His first assignment was to learn how to live before God. If you do not know your purpose when you are alone, marriage will not give it to you, children will not create it, and a career will not define it. Purpose must begin with God and remain strong enough to carry you through every season of life.

**Note:** That is exactly the question Solomon wrestled with.

## II. What Solomon Said While Alone and Looking Back

### Ecclesiastes 1:2

“Meaningless! Meaningless! says the Teacher. Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

The Hebrew word translated “**meaningless**” is **hevel**. It literally means vapor, breath, mist, or smoke. Solomon was not saying that life has no meaning. He was saying that life is temporary. The word describes something that is here for a moment and then gone. Life can feel permanent while we are living it, but Solomon reminds us that our days pass quickly. Like breath on a cold morning, steam rising from a cup of coffee, or a cloud drifting across the sky, life appears for a season and then disappears. His point was not that life is meaningless, but that life is too brief to waste on things that do not ultimately matter.

### **Note: What Did Solomon Learn?**

Solomon spent his life pursuing nearly everything a person could desire. God gave him wisdom, wealth, power, influence, houses, gardens, projects, accomplishments, relationships, and opportunities that few people in history have ever experienced. Yet after examining all of life's pursuits, Solomon repeatedly concluded that many of the things people spend their lives chasing are temporary. He described them as “a chasing after the wind.” His message was simple: possessions do not last, achievements do not satisfy forever, and even success can leave a person empty if it is disconnected from God's purpose.

Throughout Ecclesiastes, Solomon observed that life moves quickly, generations come and go, work never completely ends, money never fully satisfies, pleasure never permanently fulfills, wisdom is valuable but cannot stop death, and time eventually changes everything. After spending twelve chapters searching for meaning, Solomon arrived at one final conclusion.

### Ecclesiastes 12:13

“Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind.”

In other words, Solomon concluded that life is not ultimately about accumulating more, accomplishing more, or becoming more important. Life is about knowing God, serving God, and faithfully carrying out the assignment He has given you. The question is not simply, “How much did I accomplish?” The question is, “Did I accomplish what God created me to do?”

**Key Question: What Should You Do with This Message?**

- A. That depends on what you want to do.
- B. That depends on what you are gifted to do.
- C. That depends on the resources you have available.
- D. Most importantly, that depends on what God created and called you to do.

**III. Things the Bible Says Affect Your Sense of Purpose**

**1. Your Relationship with God Shapes Your Sense of Purpose**

**Jeremiah 29:11**

“For I know the plans I have for you...”

Before you knew yourself, God knew His plans for you.

Purpose begins with God.

**2. The Level of Your Instruction You Receive Shapes Your Purpose**

**Psalm 32:8**

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.”

God is the ultimate guide.

Purpose is often discovered through instruction.

**3. Your Parents Shape Your Potential Purpose**

**Proverbs 22:6**

“Start children off on the way they should go...”

### **3. Your Mentors and Teachers Shape Your Sense of Purpose**

#### **2 Timothy 1:5–6**

I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. (2 Timothy 1:5, NIV)

### **4. Your Life Experiences Shape Your Sense of Purpose**

#### **Romans 8:28**

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him...”

### **Four Signs You May Be Drifting from Purpose**

- 1. You Are Busy but Not Productive** (Activity is not the same as progress)
- 2. You Are Active but Not Fulfilled**
- 3. You Are Successful but Not Satisfied**
- 4. You Are Surviving but Not Growing**

**Next Time: We will discuss your need for Fruitfulness**

**Question: What are you producing with the life God has given you?**

**Key Question: Is my life producing the kind of results that I want to see?**

## Sources

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau — Median age at first marriage:

- Men: approximately 30.2 years
- Women: approximately 28.6 years

<sup>2</sup> CDC National Center for Health Statistics:

- Men: approximately 75–76 years life expectancy
- Women: approximately 80–81 years life expectancy