SAMPLE COLLECTION
OF
PURPOSE-IN-LIFE
SCRIPTURES
& QUOTATIONS

Excerpts from Research Project of Katie Brazelton, PhD, MDIV, MA
DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE A LIFE PURPOSE?

Dostoyevsky, Clemens, Shaw, and Warren (1800’s to 1900’s) agree, “Yes, most certainly!”

The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for.
From: The Brothers Karamazov
~ Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881) Russian Orthodox Christian novelist | philosopher

The two most important days in life are the day you born and the day you discover the reason why.
~ Samuel Langhorne Clemens, AKA Mark Twain (1835–1910) American author of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer | humorist | publisher | lecturer | atheist

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.
~ George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) Irish playwright | 1925 Nobel Prize Literature | co-founder London School of Economics | was an atheist, denying the existence of a deity, but in his thirty’s, leaned more toward New Ageism (spirituality, mysticism, environmentalism, and holism)

Without God, life has no purpose, and without purpose, life has no meaning. Without meaning, life has no significance or hope.
From: The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here for?
~ Rick Warren (1954) American influential pastor | bestselling author | more than 30 million copies sold of one of his books
Do You think You Have a Life Purpose? (continued)

The Psalmist David thought so

...the Lord’s plans stand firm forever; his intentions can never be shaken (Psalm 33:11 NLT).

David echoed, 40:5 O Lord my God, you have performed many wonders for us. Your plans for us are too numerous to list. 57:2 I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill his purpose for me. 138:8 The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever (Psalms 40:5, 57:2, 138:8 NLT).

Artist Gauguin was tormented by that very question, committing suicide in utter despair and doubt.

Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?

[D'où Venons Nous / Que Sommes Nous / Où Allons Nous ?]

~ Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) French post-Impressionist artist, painted D'où Venons Nous in 1897, while suicidal over the tragic death of his favourite daughter, his mounting debt, and his health problems | converted to Theosophy, an eclectic mix of Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and mysticism
MIGHT YOUR PURPOSE BE TO GIVE & RECEIVE LOVE?

A Saturday Night Live comedian and a romance novelist believe that love is our purpose

After I stopped believing in God, I realized it was completely up to me to create my own meaning and my purpose was my own. …. Now I have an adopted daughter [from China], so I think my meaning comes partly from the fact that I’m going to influence her personality by my presence.
~ Julia Sweeney (1959) American actress | comedian | author | cast on Saturday Night Live in 1990’s | atheist

Widower Garret Blake’s first letter to his deceased wife, Catherine “…it is at times [moments] like this [these] that I know what my purpose is in life. I am here to love you, to hold you in my arms, to protect you. I am here to learn from you and to receive your love in return. I am here because there is no other place to be.”
~ Nicholas Sparks (1965) American bestselling romance novelist | screenwriter

The Bible teaches: Love and be loved

Paul writes, God is using us to speak to you: we beg you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, receive the love he offers you—be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20 TLB).
COULD YOUR PURPOSE BE TO SERVE OTHERS?

Prophet Muhammad (570CE—632CE) thinks so

Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and set free the captives.
~ Prophet Muhammad (PBUH, Peace Be Upon Him) (570CE—632CE) Founder of Islam | God’s messenger sent to confirm teachings preached previously by Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets

A resounding yes from an 1800’s author, physician, and physicist

The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity.
And... Without knowing what I am and why I am here, life is impossible.
From: What Is To Be Done? (1886)
~ Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) Russian writer regarded as one of the greatest

The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others.
~ Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965) French-German physician | philosopher | humanitarian | organist | 1952 Nobel Peace Prize for his Reverence for Life philosophy. Lutheran; then Unitarian Universalist

Only a life lived for others is worthwhile.
and
Without deep reflection one knows from daily life that one exists for other people.
~ Albert Einstein (1879–1955) German theoretical physicist | developed the theory of relativity | Ethical Culturist | Humanist

Jesus says that service was His purpose!

Jesus said, For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28 NLT). See also Mark 10:45 NLT.
DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR PURPOSE IS TO FIND HAPPINESS?

Yes, declares Aristotle, if you agree with my definition of eudaimonia!

Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.

~ Aristotle (384–322 B.C.)
Greek philosopher and scientist. Wrote Nicomachean Ethics, which includes concepts about achieving eudaimonia—translated as happiness, well-being, flourishing, virtue, ethical wisdom, and excellence.

True happiness is sweet obedience to God, explains Tozer

I am Thy servant to do Thy will, and that will is sweeter to me than position or riches or fame, and I choose it above all things on Earth or in Heaven.

~ A.W. Tozer (1897–1963) American Christian pastor | author | spiritual mentor

Oh yeah, proclaims Sir Branson!

To have fun in [my] journey through life and learn from [my] mistakes.

Sir Richard Branson’s personal mission statement (1950) British tie-loathing adventurer | philanthropist | founder of Virgin Group’s 400 companies | atheist | humanitarian

So, is happiness actually defined as “goodness, peace, and joy” or “cravings satisfied”?

For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17 NLT).

2:16 For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. 17 And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever (1 John 2:16-17 NLT).
IS PURPOSE REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?

Some deep thinkers (circa 700 BC - AD 120) say yes

YOU ARE WHAT YOUR DEEP, DRIVING DESIRE IS.
AS YOUR DESIRE IS, SO IS YOUR WILL.
AS YOUR WILL IS, SO IS YOUR DEED.
AS YOUR DEED IS, SO IS YOUR DESTINY.

~ Brihadaranyak Upanishad (circa 700 BC)
One of the oldest Upanishadic scriptures of Hinduism

Paul declares, “But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God” (Acts 20:24 NLT).

The Three Armies can be deprived of their commanding officer, but even a common man cannot be deprived of his purpose.

~ Confucius (551–479 BC) Chinese teacher | politician | philosopher

The whole life is but a point of time; let us enjoy it, therefore, while it lasts, and not spend it to no purpose.

~ Plutarch (46-120 AD) Greek essayist and biographer
Do You Think Your Purpose Is to “Just Be a Good Person”?  

Katherine Hepburn: Yes, be kind to each other

I'm an atheist, and that's it. I believe there's nothing we can know except that we should be kind to each other and do what we can for people.  

~ Katherine Hepburn (1907–2003) American actress and a leading lady in Hollywood for 60+ years. | 4 Academy Awards (a record for any performer) for Best Actress | in 1999, named by the American Film Institute as the greatest female star of Classic Hollywood Cinema

Contestant on Survivor Fiji and Survivor Micronesia: Yes

Love many. Trust few. Do wrong to none.  

~ Yau-Man Chan (1952) Malaysian-American table tennis player | technology executive | Fan-favorite Survivor: Fiji 4th place finisher | Survivor: Micronesia voted out 3rd | atheist

Are Elaborate, Human-Made Plans Futile?  

Brad Pitt: No, they are not.

I got brought up being told things were God’s way, and when things didn’t work out, it was called God’s plan.  

I always had a lot of questions about the world, even in kindergarten.  

A big question to me was fairness. If I’d grown up in some other religion, would I get the same shot at heaven as a Christian has?  

When I got untethered from the comfort of religion, it wasn’t a loss of faith for me, it was a discovery of self.  

I had faith that I’m capable enough to handle any situation. There’s peace in understanding that I have only one life, here and now, and I’m responsible.

~ Brad Pitt (1963) American actor | film producer | recipient of multiple film awards and nominations | humanitarian | environmental and human rights activist | generous philanthropist | describes himself as 80% agnostic

No, I had faith that I’m capable enough to handle any situation. There’s peace in understanding that I have only one life, here and now, and I’m responsible.
WHAT IS UNIQUE PURPOSE?

Frankl: It’s an assignment specific to an individual

Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus, everyone’s task is unique as is his specific opportunity to implement it.

~ Viktor E. Frankl (1905–1997) Austrian neurologist | psychiatrist | prisoner of war at several Nazi concentration camps | Holocaust survivor. Believed in Supermeaning as something paralleling a Superbeing, which some might call God.

It’s when God says things like...Leave/Go & Go/Lead

Abraham’s Purpose: The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you…” (Genesis 12:1).

Moses’ Purpose: 7 Then the Lord told him…. 10 “Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt…” (Exodus 3:7, 10 NLT).

Asimov: It’s like this...you can’t Not do it!

I write for the same reason I breathe—because if I didn’t, I would die.

And the...only thing about myself that I consider to be severe enough to warrant psychoanalytic treatment is my compulsion to write... That means that my idea of a pleasant time is to go up to my attic, sit at my electric typewriter (as I am doing right now), and bang away, watching the words take shape like magic before my eyes.


~ Isaac Asimov (1920–1992) Jewish-Russian birth. Atheist-American prolific writer (wrote or edited more than 500 books, especially science fiction and popular science) | professor of biochemistry.
Have You Had Your Existential Crisis Yet?!

About This Phrase:
existential crisis
[eg-zī-, ek-sī-sten-shuh l krahy-sis]
A psychological episode in which a person questions the meaning of their life and of existence itself.

Kierkegaard: A truth worth living and dying for

What I really need is to get clear about what I must do, not what I must know, except insofar as knowledge must precede every act. What matters is to find a purpose, to see what it really is that God wills that I shall do; the crucial thing is to find a truth which is truth for me, to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die.

~ Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) Danish Christian philosopher and theologian, considered to be a founder of Existentialist thought and Absurdist traditions

Sartre: Get on with it and choose your meaning!

Life has no meaning a priori... It is up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing but the meaning that you choose.

and

Man is what he wills himself to be.
From: No Exit and Three Other Plays

and... That God does not exist, I cannot deny, That my whole being cries out for God I cannot forget.

~ Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) French existentialist philosopher | atheist | humanist | screenwriter | novelist | declined 1964 Nobel Prize in Literature, as well as most official honours
DO MOST PEOPLE ASK GOD ABOUT HIS PLANS?

Susan B Anthony: Some don’t bother with God

I distrust those people who know so well what God wants them to do, because I notice it always coincides with their own desires.

~ Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906) American social reformer and women’s rights activist who was pivotal in the women’s suffrage movement. | Quaker family committed to social equality | Was Unitarian and later thought to be an agnostic (one who believes that human reason can’t justify either the belief that God exists or does not exist)

Israelites: Some don’t bother with God

1:42 But the Lord said to me [Moses], “Tell them [the Israelites] not to do it, for I will not go with them; they will be struck down before their enemies.” 43 [Moses replied:] “I told them, but they wouldn’t listen. Instead, they rebelled again against the Lord’s commandment and went on up into the hill country to fight. End of Story: The Amorites came out and chased them like bees and killed them. (Deuteronomy 1:42-45 TLB)

RUN51: Some let go of the plans they’ve made

I’m letting go of the plans I’ve made. I give it all. I give you all my days. Nothing less than my everything. Take my heart, show me your ways.

"Where You Are" composed by Jason Burris, Seth Ennis, Jeremy Green, and Chaz Miles.

From: 2017 Paravel Music album: “This Moment”

~ RUN51, a collective of artists, singer/songwriters, worship directors, youth pastors, former athletes, and Campus Crusade for Christ staff | Heart for Christian Athletes | uses the universal languages of sport and music to reach the next generation of leaders
DO MY GIFTS & TALENTS INDICATE MY PURPOSE?

The Apostle Peter says yes

4:10 God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 11 Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen (1 Peter 4:10-11 TLB).

WHAT’S IT LIKE WITH GOD AS A PURPOSE-PARTNER?

Henry Ford: With God in charge, we can expect the best

I believe God is managing affairs and that He doesn’t need any advice from me. With God in charge, I believe everything will work out for the best in the end. So what is there to worry about.


German statesman and Yiddish lexicographer say yes

The man who is born with a talent which he is meant to use, finds his greatest happiness in using it.

~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) German writer | statesman | Freethinker | humanist

Carl Sagan: We have no such cosmic parent

The significance of our lives and our fragile realm derives from our own wisdom and courage. We are the custodians of life’s meaning. We would prefer it to be otherwise, of course, but there is no compelling evidence for a cosmic Parent who will care for us and save us from ourselves. It is up to us.

~ Carl Sagan (1934–1996) American astronomer | cosmologist | astrophysicist | astrobiologist | author | science popularize, best known for his scientific contributions on extraterrestrial life | atheist | humanist | 1978 Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction
Is Our Purpose to Worship God and Be Holy?

Jodie Foster: Nay...that's a firm no

I cannot believe in God when there is no scientific evidence for the existence of a supreme being and creator.

~ Jodie Foster (1962) two-time Academy Award-winning American actress | director | producer | atheist

Frederick Buechner: Yes, touch, taste, smell your way to the holy

Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it, because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.

~ Frederick Buechner (1926) American writer | well respected theologian | ordained Presbyterian minister | author of more than thirty books

That might be your purpose, but it's surely not mine!

People are always asking, "What's the purpose of life?" That's easy. Relieve suffering. Create beauty. Make gardens.

~ Dan Barker (1949) American atheist activist | co-host of Freethought Radio | previously an evangelical Christian preacher for 19 years

Westminster Shorter Catechism (1646)

1st Question: What is the chief end of Man?

Answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever". God requires one to obey the revealed moral law, saying: "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself".

Leviticus reports: Yes, be holy because God is holy

For I am the Lord your God. You must consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy (Leviticus 11:44 NLT)
IS "THIS VERY PURPOSE"… ETERNITY?

Solomon and Paul: No doubt that eternity is real

Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT).

9:25 All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. 26 So I [Paul] run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing (1 Corinthians 9:25-26 NLT).

George Clooney: I don’t believe in heaven or hell

I don’t believe in heaven and hell. I don’t know if I believe in God. All I know is that as an individual, I won’t allow this life - the only thing I know to exist - to be wasted.

George Clooney

You have only a short period of time in your life to make your mark.

16 Ways You Can Answer When Purpose Knocks

#1-3: Best ways

Answer enthusiastically, like Isaiah:
8 Then I heard the Lord asking, “Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?” I said, “Here I am. Send me.” 9 And he said, “Yes, go…. (Full Story: Isaiah 6:1-9 NLT)

Go and speak, like Jeremiah:
7 The Lord says, “…you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you.” And Jeremiah did time after time! (Full Story: Jeremiah 1:4-19 NLT)

Be humble, like the Virgin Mary:
38 Mary said, “I am the Lord’s servant, and I am willing to do whatever he wants. May everything you said come true.” (Full Story: Luke 1:26-55 TLB)

#4: Make a sound beginning every day

A life without a purpose is a languid, drifting thing. Every day we ought to renew our purpose, saying to ourselves: This day let us make a sound beginning, for what we have hitherto done is nought.

~ Thomas A' Kempis (c. 1380–1471) German-Dutch canon | medieval Catholic monk | author of the popular book, The Imitation of Christ