



Text: Genesis 1-3, Mark 12, John 3

Glasses Story/Phoropter

Many of us have gone to the eye doctor, many of us wear contacts or prescriptive glasses, and yet many of us haven't. For those of you who go to the eye doctor, he or she probably had you sit down in front of this odd, monstrosity of a machine, it kind of looks like a transformer. It's called a Phoropter. No, it's not a dinosaur. (SLIDE)

The **Phoropter** (FOR-OP-TER) is also called a refractor and helps the eye doctor figure out the issues with your eyes.

It is my hope that this message will be similar to the concept of an eye examination. We're going to look at pieces of Scripture and *refocus on Christ*, not just for the day, but to for the year to come.

When it comes to our Christian faith, some of us might see things clearer while others might be seeing things out of focus and blurry. Just like updating a prescription, it's important to have regular updates and checkups to refocus our lives on the purpose of our faith. And to start, it's important to go back to the basics, to where things began, and to look at origins.

We're going to frame this morning's examination by using three questions:

#1: What **is** our purpose?

#2: What **happened**?

#3: What is our purpose **now** and **how** do we fulfill it?

[Pray]

We'll be traveling to several different places in Scripture, so join with me as we go through and frame the point and purpose for our lives and for the New Year. Because it's the beginning of the New Year, and it's important to start with the basics, we are going to start at the beginning of everything, Genesis 1.

Today we're going to jump right to Genesis 1 (NIV). God spoke the world into existence, furnished it in six days, and rested on the seventh. I want to direct us to the end of chapter 1, starting at verse 26 to the end of the chapter. Please read with me.

“²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

²⁹ Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.” (NIV)

What is our purpose?

What is our purpose? It's a question that we hear every so often and it seems very heavy and very loaded. “What's our purpose?” “Why are we here?” “What are we supposed to do?” There would be thousands of different answers depending on who you'd ask. Many people go about their lives with a purpose that drives and pushes them, or wander around with no purpose at all. Now, we want to focus on that question for a Christian.

What is the purpose for a follower of Christ?"

If you compare the other things and creatures created, man and woman are set apart. The creation of man and woman becomes more intimate and personal. Look again at verse 26. Instead of the text stating an impersonal third person as we have seen in the prior verses, "let there be...", as soon as man enters the creation story the text says, "Let Us Make", coming from a more personal first-person form. This recognizes the Trinity being present and involved with creation as well as the creation of people in the image and likeness of God. We were created to have closeness and fellowship with the Creator.

Look ahead with me at chapter 2 verse 15(NIV).

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." (NIV)

It's good to find and read the "action" words in Scripture. Just in verse 15 alone we see, "Took", "Put", "Work", "Take Care". God intended for His Creation to be in the Garden. There was work to be done and He wanted His creation to do it. God had a plan and purpose for us; to be caretakers and stewards of everything God created. Remember what chapter 1 verse 28 said. God gave the Earth over to His creation to rule it, to take care of it, to serve God through the work that was done.

When we look at the end of verse 15, we see the phrase, "*to work and take care of it*". In Hebrew it is, לעבדה ולשמרה, (le-ah-bah-dah ul somrah). Literally translated to mean, "*to cultivate and to keep*." What I find fascinating about this Hebrew phrase is that Old Testament scholars see a more suitable translation of le-ah-bah-dah ul-somrah to be "*to worship and to obey*."

We see humans put into the Garden to worship and obey God. Their lives were to be characterized by worship and obedience. We see God commanding His creation in the following verses 16 and 17, "*you must not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil*" inferring that God alone



Text: Genesis 1-3, Mark 12, John 3

1. Share a highlight from this past year. What was the best memory or moment you can remember?
2. What stood out to you from the message?
3. **Read Genesis 1:1-31.** When you realize God intentionally made humanity to be set apart and made in His image, how does it make you see yourself differently?
4. Our purpose is to worship and obey God; sin ruined that purpose. What do you see people choosing to worship and obey instead of God?
5. Think back to the “throne of your life” analogy. What or who sits on “your” throne? (Examples: career, family, finances, health, fitness, addictions, yourself, social media, boyfriend/girlfriend, material possessions, lust, greed, jealousy, gossip, etc.)
6. **Read John 3:16-17.** Jesus came to save the world and repair the broken purpose we once had. How can trusting and believing in Jesus change your life?
7. What are some practical ways that we can love God and love others this coming year? How can you motivate your family in doing the same?

Group Challenge, 45-Day Gospel Reading Plan & Prayer

Share how you will love God and love others this year and hold your group accountable. Check in with each other and challenge each other on how you will go about loving God and loving others. Pray for each other as you take on this challenge.

Distribute the Gospel reading plan and challenge everyone to make it a goal to read through the Gospels in 45 days. (Use the Instagram post size, notecard, or bookmark.)

This preview includes a select number of pages from this resource.

If you like what you see, download the entire resource today!

downloadyouthministry.com