

# **FAITH FOUNDATIONS**

*BUILD YOUR LIFE,  
MAKE IT COUNT*

**DAVID PLATT**

ISBN 979-8-9855655-5-3

Copyright © 2024 by David Platt and Radical, Inc.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

Published by Radical, Inc.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the ESV® Bible,  
(The Holy Bible, English Standard Version), copyright© by Crossway.

Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# CONTENTS

1	Enjoy and Exalt.....	07
2	Supernatural Power.....	19
3	A New Identity.....	31
4	All the Nations.....	41
5	The State of the World.....	51
6	The Story of God's People.....	63
7	Walking with God Through Prayer and Fasting.....	75
8	Walking with God Through His Word.....	83
9	Gospel Threads.....	93
10	The Life That Counts.....	105



# INTRODUCTION

In previous books I have written, I have had a relatively narrow audience in mind, specifically the people who live in the country and context where I have served as a pastor. This one is different. Though I believe and hope it will be helpful for those I pastor, I have written this book for people in any country or context in the world. Regardless of where you reside, how young or old you are, and what you're walking through, I've tried to write with you in mind.

I've also kept this book intentionally short so that it might not just be read, but reflected upon. I have tried to include Scripture throughout, and I encourage you to stop and soak in God's Word whenever you see it. In addition, I have included questions at the end of each chapter for contemplation and discussion. I believe you will get the most out of these pages by taking the time to meaningfully answer those questions, ideally in community with others. And if in the end you believe this would be a helpful resource for you to lead others through in order to introduce them to the foundations of following Jesus, then I encourage you to do so.

My sincere hope and prayer is that God will use this book not only to provide you with a clear understanding of the foundations of following Jesus according to his Word, but also to provoke in you an unwavering resolve to experience the life that truly counts in this world.



## 01

## ENJOY AND EXALT

My assumption is that you want your life to count for what matters most. I'm assuming you don't want to get to the end of your journey here, look back, and realize, "I missed the point." But if we're not careful and intentional, that's exactly what will happen.

To put my cards on the table from the beginning, I am a Christian—a follower of Jesus. But I want to be clear that I'm not saying that only non-Christians are missing the point of why we're here. I actually believe that in addition to non-Christians, most Christians are missing the point of why we're here. I believe that most people (Christians and non-Christians) are missing the foundational purpose of their lives.

I realize that's a strong statement. I'll be the first to admit that it sounds (and feels!) pretty bold—even offensive—to say to most people, "You're missing the point of life, and if you want your life to count for what matters most, you need to make some major changes."

But that's why I've written this book. I want to show you a concise summary not of what *I* think about the purpose of your life, for that would be a waste of your time. Instead, I want to show you what *God* says about the purpose of your life. To make sure that's the case, test

everything I say to see if it aligns with God's Word. And if it does, then I want to challenge you to ask yourself, "Does my life truly align with the purpose for which God has made me?"

For non-Christians, I believe the answer will be, "No." My aim is to show you that you are made for relationship with the God who created you. That relationship is only possible through faith in Jesus, so apart from following him, you will miss the point of your life.

At the same time, for many Christians I believe the honest answer will also be, "No, my life is not aligned with the purpose for which God made me." Or at least, "Not completely." This is because there are some essential foundations of faith in God that, for a long time, we have either unintentionally missed or intentionally ignored, or maybe we've just grown accustomed to a counterfeit version of Christianity that's most acceptable in the culture around us. I have written before about how Christians, specifically in my country, the United States, are tempted to settle for a subtly yet dangerously Americanized version of the gospel that leads to a nice, comfortable Christian spin on the American dream, when in reality we have been created by God for a much bigger dream than this.

In this short book, I want to show you that dream and invite you to live for it. It's a dream that transcends countries and cultures, and once you're captivated by it, you won't want to live for anything less than it. And once that happens, you'll come to the end of your life and conclude by God's grace, "My life here counted for what mattered most."

## MADE FOR RELATIONSHIP

The Bible is the supernaturally inspired Word of God, and it reveals who God is and how God has designed us to live. One way to learn what a book is about is by reading its bookends—its beginning and end. So let's look at the bookends of the Bible and see if we can identify God's purpose for our lives in this world according to his Word.

The first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1, tells the story of creation, including people. The first mention of human beings is in Genesis 1:26–28, where we read,

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

This account of the creation of man and woman is astounding. Unlike anything else in all the world, you and I—along with every other human being in the history of the world—are made in the image of God. That means you and I have the unique capacity to know and enjoy God in a personal relationship with him. You and I have the extraordinary ability to talk and walk with God himself. Mountains, oceans, stars, planets, plants, and animals cannot do that. Neither can

anything we make, including machines or computers, no matter how much artificial intelligence they have. Only human beings made in the image of God can experience personal relationship with God.

From the very beginning of the Bible, God is making clear why he made you and me. To make this specific to your life, **you are made to enjoy God in all of his glory.** The highest purpose of your life is to experience the thrill of a relationship with your Creator characterized by pleasure and love.

Just to make sure we're not reading too much into these initial verses of the Bible, fast-forward to when Jesus, God in the flesh, is asked the question, "Out of all the commandments in the Word, which one is most important?" Jesus answers in Matthew 22:37–38:

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.*

Is this not breathtaking? God, the most holy, beautiful, glorious, magnificent, majestic, all-powerful, infinitely-satisfying Being in all the earth, has created you and me to experience life in a love relationship with him. This is why Jesus later prays to God the Father in John 17:3, saying,

*And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

Full life is found in personally knowing the one true God.

### **THE GREATEST NEWS IN THE WORLD**

Now the last part of John 17:3 is extremely important because all of us have run from this relationship with God. It looks different in each of our lives, but we have all sinned against God, turning from his ways to our ways and trusting in ourselves more than him. Our sin has separated us from relationship with God, and if we die in this state of separation, we will spend all of eternity experiencing God's just, holy judgment for our sin away from enjoyment of him.

But the gospel—what the Bible calls the “good news”—is that despite our sin against God, God loves us and has made a way for us to be restored to relationship with him. God has done the unthinkable by coming to us in the person of Jesus. Jesus is God in the flesh, and he came to the world and lived the life none of us could live—a life of no sin. Then, even though he had no sin for which to die, Jesus chose to die on a cross to pay the price for our sin. Jesus died the death we deserve to die. The good news keeps getting better, though, because Jesus didn't stay dead for long. Three days later, Jesus rose from the grave, conquering the enemy we could not conquer: death itself.

As a result of Jesus' death and resurrection, anyone anywhere, no matter who you are or what you have done, can be reconciled to God. If you will turn from your sin and yourself and trust in Jesus as the Savior of your sin and Lord of your life, God will forgive you of all your sin and restore you to relationship with him now and for all of eternity.

Jesus put it this way in John 3:16, likely the most well-known verse in the Bible:

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

As part of the world, put your name in that sentence above. God so loves *you* that he gave his only Son for *you*, so that when *you* believe in Jesus, *you* will not experience eternal death, but *you* will experience eternal life in relationship with God.

You and I are made to know, love, experience, and enjoy God in all of his glory, and nothing in this world will ever be able to satisfy you apart from your Creator. Blaise Pascal once described the empty, endless quest for satisfaction in a person's life apart from God this way:

*This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself.*

As long as any one of us is separated from God, we will miss the ultimate—and eternal—satisfaction designed for us in God. If you have never truly begun a relationship with God through Jesus, I invite you to pause and pray now for God to forgive you of your sins through faith in Jesus and restore you to relationship with him.

Then once you do, and for all who have, live for this purpose every day: to know, love, experience, and enjoy God in all of his glory. And as you do, realize that as important as this is, if you stop here, you will still miss the purpose of your life.

## A WORLDWIDE DREAM

This is where part of the problem lies, and it's why most Christians (i.e., people who have placed their faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord) are still missing out on the purpose of their lives.

If you were to ask the average Christian to summarize the message of Christianity, you would most likely hear something along the lines of, "The message of Christianity is that God loves me." Or similar to the language of John 3:16, someone might say, "The message of Christianity is that God loves me enough to send his Son, Jesus, to die for me."

But let's think about this language and ask, "Is it complete?" Because if the message of Christianity is primarily, "God loves me," then who is the object of Christianity?

God loves *me*.

Me.

Christianity's object is *me*.

Therefore, when I think about *my* faith, I think about *my* life, *my* plans, and *my* dreams. I want to choose what works best for *me*. Even when I think about church, I want to be in a setting that's comfortable for and caters to *me*. Essentially, I create a version of Christianity that revolves around *me*.

But is this biblical Christianity?

Look back at John 3:16. Yes, you and I are included in the world that God loves, but we're clearly not the only ones God loves. God loves everyone in the world this way. God's purpose doesn't just revolve around *me*; it revolves around the *whole world*.

That takes us back to Genesis 1. Do you remember what God said right after he made man and woman in his image? Genesis 1:28 says,

*God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. . . .”*

God made us for a love relationship with him, then he said, “Fill the earth with more men and women made in my image who are enjoying me in all of my glory.” Apparently, God’s purpose for our lives doesn’t center around *you* or *me*. Instead, God’s purpose for our lives centers around spreading his glory across the earth.

In other words, the message of Christianity is not just, “God loves me.” Although that is true, it’s incomplete. The message of Christianity is, “God loves me so that I might make him known in all of his glory and love all over the world.” To use our language from earlier, according to God’s Word, **you are made to enjoy God in all of his glory and exalt God in all of the nations.** Indeed, none of us is made for an American dream, an African dream, a European dream, an Asian dream, or an Australian dream. Instead, you have been made for a worldwide dream—to spread the glory and love of God among all the nations.

## THE TRAIN OF HISTORY

This makes sense in light of the second most important commandment Jesus gave us. After Jesus said that “the great and first commandment” is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” he said,

*And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 22:39–40)*

God’s love clearly isn’t intended to center on us; it’s intended to spread to others through us. And not just to the neighbors who are most like us. When Jesus explains this commandment to a lawyer in Luke 10, he makes clear that our neighbors include people from all nations.

That leads us to the last book in the Bible. We said we’d look at the Bible’s bookends for clues to what God’s Word is about, so let’s jump to the end of Scripture. There we see a powerful picture of where all human history is headed. In Revelation 7:9–10, we read,

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”*

God has designed all of human history to climax in a countless multitude of men and women enjoying him in all of his glory and exalting him from all the nations, tribes, peoples, and languages of the world.

If this is God's ultimate purpose for all of world history, then clearly this is God's ultimate purpose for our lives in this world. If the train of history is headed toward a multitude of men and women enjoying God in all of his glory and exalting him from all of the nations, and if you want your life to count in this world, then your life should be on this train.

## **FOR CONTEMPLATION AND DISCUSSION**

Take a moment to imagine what a life would look like that is completely consumed with this purpose: enjoying God in all of his glory and exalting God among all the nations. List, and ideally discuss with others, various ways that someone who wants to make their life count for this purpose might use their time, money, and skills. Describe how they might relate to God and other people. Identify the plans and dreams they might have.

Then answer the following question:

**Is what you imagined truly what your life looks like today?**