

**EPHESIANS: THE CHURCH FROM START TO FINISH**  
**"Part V: Finding and Savoring One's MAXIMUM Meaning To His Life"**  
**(Ephesians 2:1-10)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

People today have a great need to find **meaning** in their lives!

(1) We all know of people who are looking for meaning in life apart from Jesus Christ and are missing the boat. Marin County north of San Francisco, one of the wealthiest counties in the United States also has the highest suicide rate! In Avon, Connecticut, another wealthy spot in America, a school bus driver, noting the massive passing of drugs between students on the bus simply drove up to the local police station and asked the police to board the bus and search for drugs! Kids from wealthy homes in Avon looking for fulfillment with drugs -- **why?** They are looking for fulfillment.

(2) The problem often afflicts Christians as well! A number of years ago, a man grew up in the old Russian Baptist Church of Waterbury, Connecticut. He found Christ as his Savior and heeded God's call to the pastoral ministry. He attended the Philadelphia School of the Bible and was ordained as a Baptist pastor. His credentials were good, he had excellent theology, and as a result came to pastor the Calvary Baptist Church in Waterbury. That Church was the old Russian Baptist Church that was relocated in his ministry at 3000 North Main Street in Waterbury as the Calvary Baptist Church.

However, due to circumstances I am not that familiar with, difficulties emerged, and that pastor had to leave his post under somewhat trying interpersonal problems. Here was a man who had to leave his **home** church where he had grown up, leaving its **pastorate!**

This man's experience would make many **other** Christians give up trying to serve the Lord! Feelings of possibly feeling incompetent or cynical because others would think less of him would discourage many others were they to have walked in his shoes.

**How does a person, even a CHRISTIAN who has believed in CHRIST find maximum MEANING to his life when he or others seem to run up against a spiritual "brick wall" of defeat or discouragement?**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . . "

Need: *"I know many UNSAVED people who sense a real lack of meaning in their lives! Yet, even in MY case as a CHRISTIAN, I feel I'm just 'treading water' as far as it comes to MEANING! Can I find and savor MAXIMUM purpose to MY life?! IF so, HOW? !"*

- I. **Every person in life starts out by living a very disastrously wasteful, meaningless life due to SIN, Romans 3:23, 19-20; Ephesians 2:1b-3.**
  - A. Romans 3:23 teaches all men have sinned, falling short of God's glory.
  - B. Thus, all men left to themselves are destined for hell, Rom. 3:19-20.
  - C. As such, all men, like the Ephesians to whom Paul wrote, start out living a disastrously wasteful, meaningless life, Ephesians 2:1b-3:
    1. All men as sinners walk according to the course in life established by this world's system, Eph. 2:1b-2a.
    2. In doing so, they live according to the will of Satan, the god of this world's system, Ephesians 2:2b (1 Jn. 5:19b NIV).
    3. That lifestyle is typical of life according to the ungodly lusts of the sinful nature such as lust of the eyes, lusts of the body and the pride of this **earthly (bios)** life, Eph. 2:3a with 1 John 2:16.
    4. All men have a nature that equips them to act like people destined to experience the wrath of God in hell, Eph. 2:3b.
- II. **However, GOD has a plan of GREAT UNMERITED FAVOR that specializes in raising up those living disastrously wasteful, meaningless lives unto living to the MAXIMUM of purpose:**
  - A. Out of great unmerited favor, God takes hell-destined people and **gives** them eternal life when they believe in Christ's gospel, Eph. 2:8-9.
  - B. In doing so, He **positionally** unites them with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection so that their **position** before God is a change from living under God's judgment as followers of Satan to being enthroned in God's glory together with Christ Jesus, Eph. 2:5-6.
  - C. Paul then summarizes this transformation, and how it equips one to reach his **maximum** in meaning in this life as follows, Eph. 2:10:
    1. Getting saved, or "justified" is all of God from start to finish, 10a:
      - a. The word "workmanship" comes from *poieima* and means literally "work of art or masterpiece", B.K.C., N.T., p. 624.
      - b. Since verse 9 reveals that salvation is not by man's works lest man should boast, *poieima* means that one's **getting saved**, in every way, is a work that is **God's masterpiece!**
      - c. If believers are God's **masterpiece** as far as their getting saved, from start to finish, justification is **all and only God's work!**

2. However, and **most important** for our lesson at hand, the **fulfilling** life that **follows** one's salvation must be governed **as well** by **GOD**:
  - a. The Christian has been created as God's masterpiece to **produce** good works just **opposite** the disastrously wasteful lifestyle of his pre-salvation days, Eph. 2:10a,b versus Eph. 2:2-3.
  - b. **However, such good works CANNOT occur by one's OWN direction as his sin nature must be BYPASSED to achieve godly works UNLIKE those he once performed**, Eph. 2:10c, d versus 2:2-3. **Accordingly, God offers a solution as follows:** (a) The works the believer is to perform are works that **God** has "before ordained" (KJV) or "prepared in advance" (NIV), 2:10c. From 2 Tim. 1:9, we know God this **time** was **before** the **world began!** (b) Now, the believer is to "walk" in them, the very expression used of "walking" in the evil lifestyle of verse 2, cf. Eph. 2:10c. Thus, **opposite** doing **Satan's** agenda by following one's own agenda by his own lusts, Philippians 2:12-13 reveals that **as** the believer lives by **faith**, **God** works **in place of** his **sinful nature** and **Satan's** influence to make him **both will and do** the works God has planned for him to do from eternity past, Ibid., **B.K.C., N.T.** (c) Thus, **maximum** meaning in the believer's life, whether he himself **or** others around him **think** so or **not** is achieved when the Christian **lives** by **faith**, for then he is motivated, equipped and predestined to do **exactly** and **automatically** what will most give eternal value to his lifestyle!

***Lesson Application:*** Finding the **MAXIMUM** purpose for one's life becomes **INEVITABLE** as follows: (a) First, one must be positioned in Christ by believing the Gospel of Christ, Eph. 2:8-9. (b) Next, **BUILT UPON** the grace of God in **SALVATION** is the blessing of effective works by the believer: **GOD** has taken the initiative in eternity past to **PLAN** for the believer both to **WANT** and to **DO** works that **MAXIMIZE** his usefulness for God's glory **PROVIDING** he lives by faith in God, and thus boycotts his sin nature, c f. Eph. 2:2-3 versus 2:10c,d. That takes ((a)) confession of sin (1 Jn. 1:9) and ((b)) depending on the Spirit for behavior control (Gal. 5:16-23). Then he can ((c)) obey Scripture as he encounter's life's events, 1 Jn. 2:3-6. ((d)) Thus, whether **HE** or **O THERS** evaluate his efforts as being worthwhile or **NOT**, **GOD** makes his efforts **ETERNALLY** worthwhile **IF** he lives by **FAITH!**

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

(1) I began the message giving you an illustration of a Christian who had to leave from the pastorate of his home church in Waterbury!

That minister we at Nepaug know as Reverend Walter Kalasnik.

Faith to serve the Lord with any service opportunities God opened for him.

So, when Nepaug was without a pastor for 14 months from 1980 to 1982, God used Walter as a settling, encouraging and directing interim pastor. When the "Thomaston Group" left a doctrinally-errant church and asked our Board for a leader, I gladly recommended Walter Kalasnik. Consequently, the Terryville Community Bible Church, consisting mostly of these folk, exists today. For his funeral, Reverend Walter Kalasnik had arranged for Bobby Johnson, Jr., an elder in that Terryville group to bring the gospel message!

Noteworthy to me was the fact that Walt's funeral chanced to be in the very **spot** he had once left under duress! He was honored in the Calvary Baptist Church where he **could** have **QUIT** serving God!

**Why? Reverend Kalasnik chose to live by FAITH in spite of confusing or discouraging setbacks, so God plugged Walt into His eternal plans to BROADEN his work to SEVERAL churches!**

*after* the funeral: while driving in the funeral procession to the graveside, Nadine and I passed the area where my van's transaxle had once quit. The spot was right in front of the Brass City Used Auto Dealership. Now, the dealership building is vacant. The Lord had arranged for the transaxle to break down at **that** spot in Waterbury, a town I am **not** familiar with **just after** I had conducted a **funeral** service for Marshall Klimasewski's mother! The dealer there **at that time** was on hand to recommend I use Joe's Transmission shop **just around** the **corner!**

It was as though the Lord was saying, "**Don, YOU can STAY fruitful like WALT KALASNIK was if YOU don't give up over discouragements in serving Me. If you like him live by faith, I will provide by keeping you plugged into my ETERNAL plans for blessing like when your transaxle failed in unfamiliar Waterbury!**"

**GOD makes our lives MEANINGFUL by FAITH!**

Nepaug Bible Church - <http://www.nepaugchurch.org> - Pastor's Sermon Notes - <http://www.nepaugchurch.org/Sermons/zz19980614.ht>