

Our Purpose in Life

Lesson
7

OBJECTIVE	Each young woman will seek to know and fulfill her purpose in life.
PREPARATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prepare a copy for each young woman of the five ways we can learn about our purpose in life, found in the second section of the lesson.2. If it is available in your area, you may want to show <i>Man's Search for Happiness</i>, which is part of the <i>Come unto Me</i> videocassette (53146).3. Assign young women to present any stories, scriptures, or quotations you wish.
SUGGESTED LESSON DEVELOPMENT	<p>We Have a Purpose in Life</p>
Quotation	<p>Explain that at times we may all feel unimportant and wonder if our lives really matter. Elder Gordon B. Hinckley has assured us that each person is important in the Lord's eternal plan and that He has a purpose for those of us who are born in this dispensation.</p> <p>"I believe that God has . . . chosen each of you for something of consequence in his grand design. . . . He loves you and he has a work for each of you to do" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1972, p. 106; or <i>Ensign</i>, Jan. 1973, p. 91).</p>
Teacher presentation	<p>Explain that when we compare the relatively small number of Latter-day Saints with the vast world population, we may seem insignificant. Our divine charge to prepare for the second coming of the Savior seems almost too big for so few of us. The following statement gives us encouraging counsel about the work we have to do:</p>
Quotation	<p>"For nearly six thousand years, God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the Second Coming of the Lord. Every previous gospel dispensation has drifted into apostasy, but ours will not. . . . God has saved for the final inning some of his strongest children, who will help bear off the Kingdom triumphantly. And that is where you come in, for you are the generation that must be prepared to meet your God."</p> <p>"All through the ages the prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day. Billions of the deceased and those yet to be born have their eyes on us. Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time as there is of us" (Ezra Taft Benson, "In His Steps," in <i>Speeches of the Year</i>, 1979 [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1980], p. 59).</p>
Teacher presentation	<p>Explain that we lived with our Father in Heaven for a long time before we were born and he knows everything about us—our strengths and weaknesses, our likes and dislikes, the depth of our faith and testimony, our talents and abilities, the feelings in our hearts. He knows how each of us can use these characteristics for our own best growth and for the building of the kingdom of God in these latter days.</p>
Quotation	<p>Bishop H. Burke Peterson said:</p> <p>"Do you think for a moment that Heavenly Father would have sent one of His children to this earth by accident, without the possibility of a significant work to perform? . . ."</p> <p>"My dear friends, you are a royal generation. You were preserved to come to the earth in this time for a special purpose. Not just a few of you, but all of you. There are things for each of you to do that no one else can do as well as you. . . . <i>If you will let Him, I testify that our Father in Heaven will walk with you through the journey of life and inspire you to know your special purpose here</i>" ("Your Life Has a Purpose," <i>New Era</i>, May 1979, pp. 4–5; italics added).</p>

	Learning the Lord's Will Can Give Direction to Our Lives
Scripture and discussion	<p>Read together and mark Proverbs 3:5–6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are we asked to do in this scripture? • How can we each learn the special purposes that Heavenly Father has for our lives?
Chalkboard	<p>Write the young women's answers on the chalkboard and add the following if these points are not included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Personal Prayer</i> <p>Explain that in our private prayers we can talk to our Father and ask what he would have us do while we are in mortality. President Spencer W. Kimball counseled, "It would not hurt us, either, if we paused at the end of our prayers to do some intense listening—even for a moment or two—always praying as the Savior did, 'not my will, but thine, be done' (Luke 22:42)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 5; or <i>Ensign</i>, Nov. 1979, pp. 4–5).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>Study and Meditation</i> <p>Explain that prayerful reading of the scriptures can help us understand what the Lord wants us to do. The scriptures tell us the commandments of God, which we should all follow. But we can often use the scriptures to find answers to our particular situations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. <i>Gift of the Holy Ghost</i> <p>Explain that many of the scriptures were given to help individuals understand what the Lord wanted them to do. These people lived in another time, but the advice the Lord gave to them can apply to us. Section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants is a prayer that Joseph Smith offered when he was in Liberty Jail in a time of great need. He wanted to know what God wanted him to do.</p> <p>Read verses 7 and 8, which contain part of the Lord's answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can this answer to the prayer of Joseph Smith help us know what the Lord wants us to do today? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. <i>Priesthood Blessings</i> <p>Explain that as members of the Church, we have all received the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is one of our greatest guides in understanding what the Lord wants us to do here on earth. He will prompt and direct us throughout our lives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>Patriarchal Blessings</i> <p>Explain that as worthy members of the Church, we are each entitled to a patriarchal blessing that is given from the Lord to us individually. When we receive a patriarchal blessing, we are told many of the blessings Heavenly Father has in store for us in this life and in eternity. These blessings will be ours if we live true and faithful lives. Patriarchal blessings often identify our spiritual gifts. Knowing these gifts can help us determine our purpose in life. (See D&C 46:10–12.) We are sometimes warned to avoid certain evil</p>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there times when our own will and the Lord's will might be in conflict? Ask the young women to name some of these times. • What should you do in these situations?
Teacher presentation	
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influences that our Father knows will tempt us. By knowing the promised blessings, our spiritual gifts, and the warnings, we can more wisely make decisions throughout our lives.

Story

Janet was in a dilemma. Tom had asked her to marry him. They had been dating for about a year and were very much in love. Janet had thought that the happiest day of her life would be when Tom asked her to be his wife. But the day had come and Janet felt unsettled. She hadn't given him a definite answer but had told him that she would answer the next day. What was worrying her? Tom was an elder in the Church and had said that if she wanted to, they would be married in the temple. He hadn't been able to hold a position in the Church for a while because of his work, but he had promised that he would change after they were married.

Janet remembered that her patriarchal blessing said something about the person she was to marry, so she got it out and began to read: "The time will come when your hand will be sought in marriage. I bid you pray earnestly that you may have wisdom to choose among those who seek your hand one who is worthy. By these tokens you will know the one whom the Lord would approve. He will be clean of body and mind. He will hold the holy priesthood and yearn to take you to the temple and there be sealed to him, and him to you for time and all eternity." Janet knew that Tom did not meet all these requirements. She knew he was not one of whom the Lord would approve.

Quotation

Elder Thomas S. Monson said: "Help can come through your patriarchal blessing. Such a blessing contains chapters from your book of eternal possibilities. Read your blessing frequently. Study it carefully. Be guided by its cautions. Live to merit its promises" ("The Lighthouse of the Lord," p. 19).

It Is Our Responsibility to Act on the Direction We Are Given

Teacher presentation

Explain that so far, the lesson has discussed ways we can seek direction and receive guidance. But we must take the responsibility to act on the direction we receive. We cannot just wait for the Lord to tell us what to do. Elder John Groberg said:

Quotation

"In the past I have tried to figure out whether I should go into business or into teaching or into the arts or whatever. As I have begun to proceed along one path, having more or less gathered what facts I could, I have found that if that decision was wrong or was taking me down the wrong path—not necessarily an evil one, but one that was not right for me—without fail, the Lord has always let me know just this emphatically: 'That is wrong; do not go that way. That is not for you!'

"On the other hand, there may have been two or three ways that I could have gone, any one of which would have been right and would have been in the general area providing the experience and means whereby I could fulfill the mission that the Lord had in mind for me. Because he knows we need the growth, he generally does not point and say, 'Open that door and go twelve yards in that direction; then turn right and go two miles. . . .' But if it is wrong, he will let us know—we will feel it for sure. I am positive of that. So rather than saying, 'I will not move until I have this burning in my heart,' let us turn it around and say, 'I will move unless I feel it is wrong; and if it is wrong, then I will not do it.' By eliminating all of these wrong courses, very quickly you will find yourself going in the direction that you ought to be going, and then you can receive the assurance: 'Yes, I am going in the right direction. I am doing what my Father in Heaven wants me to do because I am not doing the things he does not want me to do.' And you can know that for sure. That is part of the growth process and part of accomplishing what our Father in Heaven has in mind for us" ("What Is Your Mission?" in *Speeches of the Year, 1979* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1980], pp. 97–98).

Discussion

- What responsibility do we have in making decisions about our personal lives? How did Elder Groberg know if he was going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Thought questions

Explain that taking responsibility for our lives requires action on our part. Ask the young women to answer the following questions to themselves:

1. When was the last time I fasted and earnestly prayed for direction in my life?
2. After my prayers, do I listen for the Lord's answers?

3. Have I received my patriarchal blessing? If so, how long has it been since I read it? Am I using it as a guide in making decisions?
 4. Have I specifically asked my Heavenly Father to direct me in finding his will for my life?
 5. Am I living worthily so that I can be in tune with the promptings of the Spirit?
 6. Am I making decisions and setting goals that will set me on a righteous course?
 7. Are my daily actions pleasing to the Lord?
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Summary

Quotation

In an address to Church youth, Elder John Groberg suggested that we “reaffirm in our lives the importance of at least three things: first, that God, our Father in Heaven, does have a specific mission for all of us to fulfill and perform while we are here upon this earth; second, that we can, here and now in this life, discover what that mission is; and third, that with His help we can fulfill that mission and know and have assurance—here and now in this life—that we are doing that which is pleasing to our Father in Heaven. These are all very important concepts; and they are all true” (“What Is Your Mission?” p. 92).

Lesson Application

Hand out the copies of the five ways we can learn about our purpose in life. Encourage each young woman to consider the ideas and strive to learn more about her life’s purpose.

Contributing to Family Life