

MEANINGFUL LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

Can we give any reason for considering ourselves significant?

Do we feel significant?

How much of our time, energy, and resources is spent on the quest for meaning?

Importance of meaningfulness

Results of meaninglessness are boredom, pleasure seeking, escape (drugs, suicide, etc.), hedonism, materialism, busyness, struggle for power.

John 10:10b: Jesus came that people might have “abundant life.”

Definition of meaningfulness

The term *life* does not mean “existence,” but “meaningful existence.” It has to do with quality, not quantity. It includes a state of perceived “blessedness.” Meaningfulness comes from being part of a guaranteed purpose that is bigger than us.

Basis of meaningfulness

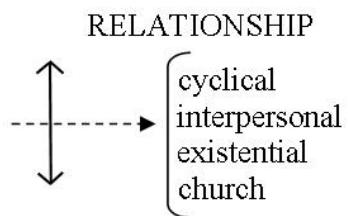
Meaningfulness is based on persons acting together toward a common goal. Meaning does not come from individuals in competition with each other, but from belonging to the group (existential) and contributing toward its needs and purposes (eschatological). It is love, not competition. Only what is omnipotent can determine its own meaning.

Meaningfulness in mankind comes from nature (image of God), relationship (love of God and man), and purpose (to the praise of the glory of his grace; God’s delight).

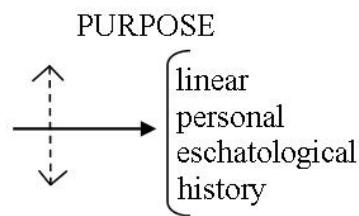
I. COMPONENTS OF MEANINGFULNESS



A. A personal God can love.



B. A personal God can purpose.



OBJECTIVE <i>independent</i> <u>God's nature</u>	<p><u>Web of associations</u> (John 17:3; activity)</p> <p>Relevance</p> <p>Wholeness (whole is more than the sum of the parts)</p> <p>Orientation (vs. lostness, Acts 17:26-27)</p> <p>Praise (of grace, Ephesians 1:4-6)</p>	<p>Guaranteed by power (Meaning must lie outside of man because he is subject to frustration.)</p> <p>Involves something new (creativity) (note Ecclesiastes 1:2-9)</p> <p>Made known by revelation (Psalm 8:3-6)</p>
SUBJECTIVE <i>dependent</i> <u>man's nature</u>	<p>sense of orientation</p> <p>sense of belonging</p> <p>sense of wholeness</p> <p>experience of loving</p> <p>experience of being loved</p> <p>sense of loyalty to what is bigger than we</p>	<p>sense of purpose</p> <p>sense of progress</p> <p>sense of achievement</p>

II. CAUSES OF MEANINGFULNESS

Meaninglessness comes from sin because sin breaks relationships and frustrates purposes.

Ecclesiastes **12:13**
 Romans **8:20-21**

III. ALTERNATIVE TO THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MEANINGFULNESS

- A. Hedonism (entertainment): Ecclesiastes **6:7**
- B. Materialism

Ecclesiastes **5:10**: “*Those who love silver are not satisfied with silver.*”

Luke **12:15b**: “*People’s life does not consist of the things they possess.*”

The whole universe viewed from a human being’s viewpoint may be awesome, but it is still meaningless.

In an omniscient (vs. impersonal) reality, “blessedness” provides a major element in the meaningfulness picture. A human person is known and accepted by a principled omnipotent person. [personal content]

- C. Escape (suicide, drugs, asceticism, sleep, busyness): Ecclesiastes **2:18-19**

Striving after altered states of consciousness is not the goal of Christianity as it is among Eastern religions.

- D. Knowledge: Ecclesiastes **1:18**
- E. Being remembered: Ecclesiastes **2:15-16**
- F. Fame
- G. Friends
- H. Power

CONCLUSION

Death is the critique on material-based approaches to living.