

# Finding Your Purpose In Christ

Romans 1:6-7



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**FOCAL Read Responsively** Romans 1:6-7 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: (7) **To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called [to be] saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**<sup>KJV</sup>

When I was a young boy I was *called* many different things. My friends gave me *nicknames* and called me by them. My enemies *called* me other things – such names I cannot share from a pulpit of God. My mother calls me “David”, you call me “Brother David”. When someone calls out the name “Darvin” I pay little attention, but when I hear someone call out “David” I immediately turn to see if the call is for me.

Our names are important. We respond to our names.

The Christian way of life is a *relational* way of life. Prior to Christ we founded our *relationship in the world*. On the day we met Christ and believed on Him our relationship changed. Because of the Lord Jesus Christ we are changed and brought into a new family. God has called us, set us apart, and given us new purpose. **Billy Graham** said<sup>1</sup>:

**“Christ is calling Christians today to cleansing, to dedication, to consecration, and to full surrender. It will make the difference between success and failure in our spiritual lives. It will make the difference between being helped and helping others. It will make a difference in our habits, in our prayer life, in our Bible reading, in our giving, in our testimony, and in**

KJV All texts are King James Version (Authorized), unless otherwise noted  
1 In *The Secret of Happiness*, ISBN 1-59328-067-X43576

our church membership. This is the Christian's hour of decision!”

### **1. A Christian Is A “Called” Person**

A recent article written in the *Los Angeles Times* notes:

“The Presbyterian Church USA is famous for its 1993 conference, cosponsored with the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other mainline churches, in which participants “reimagined” God as “Our Maker Sophia” and held a feminist-inspired “milk and honey” ritual designed to replace traditional bread-and-wine Communion. ... the Episcopalians at Columbus overwhelmingly refused even to consider a resolution affirming that Jesus Christ is Lord. When a Christian church cannot bring itself to endorse a bedrock Christian theological statement repeatedly found in the New Testament, it is not a serious Christian church. It's a Church of What's Happening Now, conferring a feel-good imprimatur on whatever the liberal elements of secular society deem permissible or politically correct. ... When a church doesn't take itself seriously, neither do its members. It is hard to believe that as recently as 1960, members of mainline churches — Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans and the like — accounted for 40% of all American Protestants. Today, it's more like 12% (17 million out of 135 million). Some of the precipitous decline is due to lower birthrates among the generally blue-state mainliners, but it also is clear that millions of mainline adherents (and especially

their children) have simply walked out of the pews never to return. According to the Hartford Institute for Religious Research, in 1965, there were 3.4 million Episcopalians; now, there are 2.3 million. The number of Presbyterians fell from 4.3 million in 1965 to 2.5 million today. Compare that with 16 million members reported by the Southern Baptists<sup>2</sup>.”

It is impossible for me to find any joy in my heart at the decline and fall of any local Church in America. Unlike Jacob, we should not plot and rejoice when Esau sells his birthright for a pot of stew! The Lord foresaw Esau's greed while the child was yet in his mother's womb and told Rebekah

**“Two nations [are] in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and [the one] people shall be stronger than [the other] people; and the elder shall serve the younger.” Genesis 25:23**

Why did Esau lose his birthright? Can his behavior be my behavior? Do I want it to be?

Both Esau and Jacob were children of Isaac. Both children were, quite frankly, greedy and plotting. Jacob, however, pursued the blessing of his father Isaac, whereas Esau grew up thinking that his purpose was to fill his belly at all costs. Esau's failure to *remember his purpose* cost him his inheritance.

<sup>2</sup> article entitled “Liberal Christianity is paying for its sins” by Charlotte Allen, the Catholicism editor for Beliefnet and the author of “The Human Christ: The Search for the Historical Jesus.”, July 9, 2006

The Christian is not called to be like Esau, filling his belly, satisfying his or her cravings along with the unbelieving world. When the Church that Jesus loves *cannot define its purpose* it begins to lose ground. When the **Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)**, ceases to be like Jesus, ceases to be **about the Father's business (Luke 2:49)**, the Church will begin to die. We must always remember the words of our Lord:

**John 15:5 I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.**

As we begin our study in Romans we want to focus on these words:

**FOCAL** Romans 1:6 Among whom **are ye also the called<sup>3</sup> of Jesus Christ:**

The title “Christian” is not a word that we wear like the title “mister, misses, or ms”. A Christian is a person who has been saved by faith in Christ. Once saved, that person has *entered into the family of God* and becomes a *functioning member of a local Church*. You who believe are the **called of Jesus Christ**. The word “called” is the Greek word *κλητός*, which means “invited, appointed”.

3 G2822, *κλητός*, klētos, *klay-tos'*, From the same as G2821; *invited*, that is, *appointed*, or (specifically) a *saint*: - called.

**1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.**

What does the Greek word *κλητός*, “called” mean?  
What are its implications?

He loved us *before* we loved Him.

**John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

God loved us and gave Himself for us *before* we loved Him. When we “**were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for us**”<sup>4</sup> (Romans 5:6). While “**we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**”. (Romans 5:8). God's love *purposefully sought us out* and, on the day that we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and were saved (Acts 16:31) *we became intentional and purposeful Christians*.

The Christian is a person who is **called – appointed – given purpose**. You have been called to salvation by God. You answered that call by *repenting* or *turning away* from your old way of life and by *turning to* God in

4 Romans 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

faith through Jesus. Faith in Jesus Christ (1) Washes from sin, cleansing your lives, and (2) gives every believer *new purpose* in this present life. The Bible says:

**Revelation 1:5-6 And from Jesus Christ, [who is] the faithful witness, [and] the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, (6) And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**

Do you see the connection?

You are washed in Christ's own blood, but now that you are washed you have been made kings and priests unto God the Father. A Christian is appointed to service.

A Christian has an obligation to serve his Father. A Christian has a greater purpose than that of Esau, filling his or her belly. Our purpose is *to serve the Lord in the capacity that he has called us.*

## **2. A Christian – And The Local Church – Is Called To Be The Beloved of God**

**FOCAL** Romans 1:7 ... **beloved<sup>5</sup> of God**, called

5 G27, ἀγαπητός, agapētos, ag-ap-ay-tos', From G25; beloved: - (dearly,

**[to be] saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

If you are a Christian, saved by faith in Christ, you are called to a Great Love by God. God loves you! You are given the title – as a Church – of ἀγαπητός, or the **Much Loved or Beloved** of God. *Focus on the Family's* H.B. London says, “God loves you as though you were the only one in all the world to love - and that makes you a very important person.”. That is so true – God does love you with a *focused and intense* love. God is passionate about you. But Beloved, God wants you to be *passionate about Him.*

To whom does the title ἀγαπητός, “Beloved”, belong to? What are the implications of this title?

The title “Beloved” belongs to not just one person, but belongs to the Church that Jesus died for. How important is this title? God the Father gives you the *exact same title* that He gave to His Precious Son Jesus at his earthly baptism:

**Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved<sup>6</sup> Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

Almighty God spoke through the Prophet Isaiah of the Coming Messiah, the Beloved of God. This prophecy

well) beloved, dear.  
6 ibid

was fulfilled in Jesus, as the Scripture records:

**Matthew 12:18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved<sup>7</sup>, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.**

When Jesus – our Savior and Lord – stood on the Mount of Transfiguration the Father spoke, saying:

**Matthew 17:5 ... This is my beloved<sup>8</sup> Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.**

The Son of God is the **Beloved of God**. As the Beloved of God Jesus sought to do the Father's will in all things. Our Lord said **“I come not to do My will, but the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34)**. The **Beloved** always seeks to do the Father's will. In the same way, the **Beloved, the Church** seeks to do **“the will of Him that loved us and gave himself for us” (Galatians 2:20)**. The Beloved will *always* seek to do that which is foremost in the heart of her intended!

No one falls deeply, madly, passionately in love with another person, then seeks to *malign* or *shame* that person.

The Church is the **Beloved of God**. We are to be more in love with God than we are in love with the

<sup>7</sup> ibid

<sup>8</sup> ibid

world or with ourselves. We belong to God. He died for us.

When the Apostle wrote the Church he acknowledged that these believers were *well known for their passionate love of the Lord*. Paul writes:

**FOCAL Romans 1:8 ... First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.**

Paul **thanked our God** because the Roman **Church** had kept a faithful witness before the whole world. The Church at Rome was *acting* like the **Beloved of God**. They were living their lives for Jesus. Compare this *praise* from the great Apostle to the *pitiful performance* shown by the *Church at Corinth*:

**1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly [that there is] fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.**

The Apostle *praised God through Christ* for the Church at Rome, but for the Church of Corinth he expressed *shocked outrage*. **“How dare you tolerate such a thing? Do you not know that *even the unbelieving Gentile world* doesn't do what you people are doing! A son taking his father's *wife*, committing incest with *his own mother*. Are you out of your minds?”**

When the Christian and the Church forgets that it, like Jesus, is to be the **Beloved of God**,

When we forget that we should love God above all else – the Church moves from *commendation* to *condemnation*. It turns from being a *Church* and turns into being a *clubhouse*.

God is not pleased with such things. God is pleased when His Church *loves Him fervently, as a Bride loves her Groom*.

**FOCAL** Romans 1:8 ... **your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.**

Rome was the center of civilization at this time in human history. It was the capital city of the Roman empire. Loving the Lord was not an easy thing for the Roman Christians to do. At the least these believers were reviled by their fellow countrymen – at the most the Roman Church was subject to being persecuted, prosecuted, and purged. Why was this? Rome was famous for its *pantheon of the gods*. Every person had their own idol that they worshiped and, as Rome took over new territories, it absorbed new false gods. Why persecute those who worshiped the God of Christ?

Rome was becoming more and more unstable. Its society had moved toward decadence as false gods abounded. The mighty Roman Army was divided into several groups all led by competing generals. The Roman Senate

had little control over the armies, and the ruler of Rome, Caesar, began to rule badly. Rome was disintegrating from the inside out, and a scapegoat was needed. When the Church at Rome stood up for Jesus Christ it fell under the scrutiny of the rulers of the empire. “We must not blame ourselves – let’s look for someone else to take the blame” one would say. Another replied, “How about those *followers of the Nazarene*? They say that Jesus is the only Way to God. They say that this Nazarene died for the sins of the Empire. They’d make a good target!” Another replies, “How dare they! Yes, let’s target the Christian at Rome – we’ll wipe this thing out at the root.” And so it began. **Fox’s Book of Martyr’s**<sup>9</sup> states:

**“The first persecution of the Church took place in the year 67, under Nero, the sixth emperor of Rome. This monarch reigned for the space of five years, with tolerable credit to himself, but then gave way to the greatest extravagancy of temper, and to the most atrocious barbarities. Among other diabolical whims, he ordered that the city of Rome should be set on fire, which order was executed by his officers, guards, and servants. ... This dreadful conflagration continued nine days; when Nero, finding that his conduct was greatly blamed, and a severe odium cast upon him, determined to lay the whole upon the Christians, at once to excuse himself, and have an opportunity of glutting his sight with new cruelties. This was the occasion of the first persecution; and the barbarities exercised on the Christians were such as even excited the commiseration of the Romans themselves. Nero even refined upon cruelty, and contrived all manner**

of punishments for the Christians that the most infernal imagination could design. In particular, he had some sewed up in skins of wild beasts, and then worried by dogs until they expired; and others dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed to axletrees, and set on fire in his gardens, in order to illuminate them. “

The Church at Rome, the **Beloved of God**, decided that she *loved the Lord more than she loved herself*. Every believer *understood his or her purpose* was to **be the Beloved of God** no matter what. If you love God *fervently* as the Beloved, then when attacked you will *not attack back*. You will do as our Beloved commands, saying:

**Matthew 5:43-44 "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"**

The way of the world is “**hit me, I'll hit you**”. The Way of the Master is “**hit me, I'll love you anyway**”. As a pastor I can tell you I have people calling me at various times trying to get me to bless bad behavior. May I say, dear Ones, if I love the Lord **as His Beloved** I cannot stand behind nor justify any behavior not previously endorsed by Jesus Christ. And listen, dear Friends – neither should you! If you are God's Beloved then you

are under the mandate of:

**Romans 12:19: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."**

Understand it this way, if you can. I love my wife dearly, and will protect her from any attack. She is **my Beloved**, and I cannot tolerate an attack on her. Do you think that Christ loves His Church any *less*? Do you think that Jesus, having shed His Blood for you, will not *come to your defense in due season*?

If I am the **Beloved of God**, how will I respond to attacks against my person?

If each believer could focus on the reality that we are **The Beloved of God**, how the Church would make a difference in our present *Roman Society*. America today is like Rome of yesterday. Every man follows his own gods or goddesses, and *focus devotion to Christ and Christ alone* is not tolerated in our present society. The world does not mind the false teaching that Jesus is a god amongst other gods, *yet the world violent rejects* Jesus as “**the Way, the Truth, and the Life – no man comes unto the Father but by Him**” (John 14:6).

**3. The Beloved of God Is Always “Set Apart”**

**FOCAL** Romans 1:7 ... **called**<sup>10</sup> **[to be] saints**<sup>11</sup>:  
Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

You are **called** to be the **Beloved of God**, and you are also **called to be Saints**. The word **saint** is literally the Greek word **ἅγιος**, which means “**someone set apart or consecrated for a specific purpose**”. You are the **Beloved of God**. God set you apart to be used by Him and Him alone. My wife stays in my house, cooks food *primarily* for me, sleeps in my bed, responds to my love, shares my name. She is *set apart* to me, just as I am *set apart* to her. We are bound together in love and purpose.

This is what God expects of His **Beloved**. You are bound to Him, and bound to live for Him. You can see that the Apostle Paul *acted out his status of Beloved*:

#### **a. The Beloved Are Set Apart By a Thankful Heart**

Romans 1:8 First, **I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all**, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

Paul thanked God for the Roman believers – but Paul kept a thankful heart. He followed the Scripture:

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10 G2822, **κλητός**, klētos, *klay-tos'*, From the same as G2821; *invited*, that is, *appointed*, or (specifically) a *saint*: - called.

11 G40, **ἅγιος**, hagios, *hag'-ee-os*, From **ἅγιος** hagos (an *awful* thing) compare G53, [H2282]; *sacred* (physically *pure*, morally *blameless* or *religious*, ceremonially *consecrated*): - (most) holy (one, thing), saint.

**Colossians 3:15** **And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.**

Christians should be **set apart in their thankfulness to God**. Our hearts should be filled with praise to Him Who loved us and died for us. We are to be thankful, even when things are dark and dreary – for we are *still His Beloved*. **Dr. Ray Pritchard** writes<sup>12</sup>:

**“A few years ago I received a phone call early in the morning. A baby born prematurely had died during the night, and I was needed at the hospital. A few minutes later as I pulled into the hospital parking lot, the thought came to me that there is no greater tragedy than the death of a child. I wondered as I waited for the elevator what I would say when I finally saw the parents. A nurse met me and took me a small room. When I walked in, I saw the mother and father sitting together, holding the body of their infant son. ... The mother wept as she held her baby and repeated, “Why did this happen?” Near the end of my visit, I held my hand under the baby’s head and thought about all the dreams and all the prayers that had been invested in him. Now he was gone almost before he arrived. “God must have a reason,” the mother said. “He has a reason, doesn’t he?” ... I told the mother the honest truth, “God does have a reason, but I don’t know what it is.”**

We may not know why things happen the way that they

do, but we know **we are the Beloved of God**. God loves you whether you are on the mountain or in the valley.

### **b. The Beloved Are Set Apart By A *Serious* Commitment To God**

**FOCAL** Romans 1:9 For **God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, ...**

The Apostle – as well as the Church at Rome – was *whole heartedly devoted to God*. The Beloved will always seek God with all their strength! **George Barna**<sup>13</sup>, who routinely tracks religious activity in the United States, stated:

**“Spirituality is in vogue in our society today. It is popular to claim to...have a spiritual commitment... The recent Grammy awards were perhaps indicative of this breakdown between self-perception and reality. The members of the group that won the award for best song thanked God for the victory then immediately followed with profanities that had to be bleeped from the broadcast. It seems as if God is in, but living for God is not. Many Americans are living a dual life – one filled with good feelings about God and faith, corroborated by some simple religious practices, and another in which they are in control of their own destiny and operate apart from Him”**

God expects those who *love Him to live for Him*. Jesus

<sup>13</sup> From <http://www.barna.org>

said:

**John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.**

People today put their jobs, their children, their own selves above the Lord Jesus Christ. I tell you this, the unbelieving world – as well as your unbelieving offspring – watch what you do. If you do not commit yourselves to love your God above all else, you will have little impact on the world around you.

### **c. The Beloved Are Set Apart By A *Prayerful* Heart**

**FOCAL** Romans 1:9 ... **without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;**

Paul didn't just talk about praying, he prayed. Paul didn't pretend to pray, he prayed. Prayer wasn't a religious exercise for Paul, but communication with God. The Bible says:

**Psalms 5:3 "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."**

**Psalms 55:17 "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice."**

If you love Someone, you love talking with them. If you love Someone, you love talking about them. Paul loved the Romans, and love the Lord, so he spent much time talking to the Lord about the Romans.

Prayer is talking *to* God *about* the things that are important to you. The Bible says:

**Luke 18:1 "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint"**

**1 Thessalonians 5:17 "Pray without ceasing."**

**1 Chronicles 16:11 "Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually."**

**Illustrate** A traveler went to a distant land and, finding it wonderful, returned and told others what he had seen. How beautiful that land was. The Ruler of that land is filled with love, and wanted all who came to that place to be fruitful, blessed beyond measure, and given a wondrous peace that would never end. The traveler returned from that land and encouraged many to go with him. Many heard the traveler, were blessed by his words, but refused to move to that place of joy. They saw the map, traced the trail there with their mind's eye, but stayed – like the first generation of Israel – on this side of the Jordan. You can talk about the journey, think about the journey, and even be excited about the journey. But until you decide to take the steps of faith yourself you will never experience the wonders of that land. Bill

Hybels has said that “If I’m 99% sold-out to Christ, I’m still 1% short”. You are God's Beloved – be set apart in all that you do for Him.

May God bless your hearts with these words.