

## [401: PurposeParents](#)

I have been thinking about the role that parents play in a child's PurposeQuest, even when those children are mature and out of the house. This week, I want to focus on three parents in the Old Testament, make some comments on how they were as PurposeParents and then give them a grade. See if you agree with my evaluation.

1. **Abraham** – Abraham was distracted at times by his attachment to Ishmael, whom he fathered to Hagar while he was waiting for God's promised son. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son at God's command, which shows that he certainly put God before his son and had his priorities correct. To his credit, Abraham got involved in finding Isaac a wife, but Isaac wasn't a purpose-driven man.

Isaac never accomplished much of anything and we will see that he was a poor father. That leads me to say that Abraham failed to provide adequate direction for Isaac, whose only accomplishment seems to have been unstopping some of his father's wells that the locals had filled in. Isaac obviously knew about the promises that God made to Abraham, but did little to carry them out. For all that, I give Abraham a C as a PurposeParent.

2. **Isaac** - Isaac was a man of many weaknesses. His wife Rebekah regularly had to intervene in the family's affairs when Isaac didn't seem to pay attention. No one will ever convince me that Isaac didn't know it was Jacob standing before him when Jacob tricked Isaac into giving him the blessing that belonged to the eldest. "[Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him. "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked \(Genesis 27:22-24\).](#) Isaac did not want to confront Jacob or to anger his wife.

Jacob never mentioned his father and, in part due to Isaac's poor parenting model, Jacob's family was a mess. I give Isaac an F as a PurposeParent

3. **Jacob** – What can we say about a man who played favorites, didn't confront the obvious animosity between his sons, fathered sons to four different women and paid more attention to his business than to his offspring? We would say that he was a bad parent, and that's what Jacob was. I give Jacob a D as a parent (at least he had the sense to favor Joseph over the rest, although the way he showed it caused Joseph tremendous problems).

I want to go one step further with Jacob, however. I would give Jacob an A as a grandfather. Read Genesis 48:1-22 and see how Jacob handled the blessing of Joseph's sons. He got it right! He didn't pay attention to the grandsons' age, but rather to God's purpose for their lives. He refused to follow what Joseph wanted him to do and instead released each grandchild to his divine destiny.

### **PurposeParent Lessons:**

- It's never too late to instill purpose in your children or grandchildren.
- There are no perfect parents, only a perfect God.
- God was known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, so He identifies with the weak and imperfect. There is hope for you and me!
- God has a purpose for each child.

As a parent (or future parent), meditate on and discuss the parenting skills of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as they relate to your child's purpose. What can you learn about what not to do with your children? What can you learn that will make you more effective? Can you think of other parental models to consider from the

Bible? How about Mary, Moses' parents, Hannah, Jesse or David? What can you learn from them that will make your children more in tune with their purpose and destiny? Have a great week!

## [402: Moses' Mama](#)

Last week, I wrote about [PurposeParents](#) and received a lot of feedback asking for more stuff on purpose and parenting. So due to popular demand, I will delay my series on Daniel that I was about to begin and talk about the topic at hand.

### WHAT DID SHE SEE?

When I think of a purpose parent, my mind goes to Moses' mama. She had the mixed blessing of giving birth to a son. It was "mixed" because she was certainly joyful at the birth but sad that Pharaoh's edict demanded every male baby be thrown into the river, to be drowned or eaten by crocodiles. That is what all the other mothers had probably done or been forced to do, but the story is a little different for Moses' mama.

[So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months \(Exodus 2:2\).](#)

What did Moses' mama see? When our son was born, his nose was flat against his face, his ears stood out, his hair, though wet, stood straight up and he was blue, red, pink and purple all over! My wife looked at him and looked at me to say, "Maybe he will be intelligent!" He certainly wasn't must to look at (we are proud to say he is today both an intelligent *and* good-looking 31-year-old man).

What did Moses' mama see that made her boy beautiful? She saw the purpose of God on him. She saw past the imperfections and Pharaoh's edict and saw God's hand, as Stephen said while preaching to the Sanhedrin:

["It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father's home \(Acts 7:20\).](#)

### WHAT DO YOU SEE?

So Moses' mama obeyed Pharaoh's edict, sort of. She threw her son into the river, but first she built and placed him in a waterproof basket. After all, Pharaoh didn't say that she could not do that, now did he? She was creative to preserve her son's purpose from the ravages of culture, prejudice and fear. This woman changed the world because she saw more than her baby boy; she saw God's purpose for him, which made him lovely in the sight of God.

So if and when you are a parent, what will you do? Will you choose to look at all the wrinkles, faults and weaknesses of your children, or will you focus on his or her purpose? Will you do for them what Egypt says must be done, or will you do what God's purpose warrants for them? Will you send them into the river without protection or with a handmade basket that will protect them from the dangerous elements of life so they can "float" to their divine destiny?

Moses' mama changed history by being a good PurposeParent and you can, too. Don't waste time trying to make your children perfect, and don't just hand them over to Egypt. See in them what God sees and then do what you have to do to help bring forth God's purpose in them. Have a great week!

Feel free to write a comment to this entry on the [site](#) where it is posted.

## [403: Pipe Dreams](#)

When it comes to purpose, vision and goals, many people have dreams and some share them with me. I had someone tell me he wanted to own a television station, another tell me that he wanted to give \$100 million away and still another that she wanted to have a chain of homes for abused children and women. While I listen politely and do all I can to encourage them, I am thinking all the while, "This is nothing but a pipe dream!" A pipe dream is an unrealistic hope or expectation, but until today, I didn't know the origin of the phrase until I did some research. Do you want to know where the phrase "pipe dream" came from? if you do, you know the rules - you will have to read on.

### **WHAT ARE YOU SMOKING?**

The phrase pipe dream came from the dreams some people had when they smoked opium in the 19th century. After they imbibed, they would have strange visions and some works like the poem *Kubla Khan* were said to be the result in part to opium. There is another question among the young today when they hear someone make an outlandish statement. They ask, "What are you smoking?" an obvious reference to someone who isn't in full control of their faculties.

Now that you know the source, you may not think it fair on my part to refer to some people's dreams as pipe dreams, but I maintain it is fair - not because they are on drugs, but because their dream is totally and completely unrealistic.

You see, God cannot give you what you are not ready to receive. If you have not developed your potential, God cannot and will not promote you, no matter how much faith you have. Let's consider the examples I mentioned in the opening paragraph.

The man who wanted to own a television station had no experience in business or media for that matter. He worked in an unrelated job and had no concept of what television was all about, nor was he prepared to learn. The man who wanted to give \$100 million away was playing the lottery, instead of being involved in jobs or training that could teach him how to manage and distribute large sums of money. The woman who wanted to earn a chain of homes was not even working with the abused or afflicted!

In my humble opinion, none of the people in those three examples was doing anything to prepare themselves for their dream. They were like people who were believing for a best-selling book but never wrote or developed their writing skills. They all had pipe dreams in the Lord and they were just as fantastic as someone who was on a hallucinatory drug.

### **SUCCESS IS NO ACCIDENT**

While success requires heaps of faith, it also requires preparation. David learned to lead and protect sheep and that prepared him to be king. Saul was a Hebrew scholar and that enabled him, with God's help, to be Saint Paul. I recently read that experts estimate that it requires 10,000 hours invested in any one discipline or skill to be ready for success. In my own life, I have interviewed and counseled 2,500 people over the last eight years. I have written, read, talked and taught about purpose. I have debated, been debated, made friends, lost friends, traveled the world and gone to school. Now those are the things that I can do while I have trusted God for the things that only He can do. Even then, whatever I do is a result of His grace, but His grace would not open the door if I was not prepared to walk through it.

So what is your dream and purpose? If you know, then you must do all that you can do to see it happen in God's will and timing. If you are believing for an airplane, you can at least learn to fly! If you will travel, you can at least get a passport and learn some words in the language of the culture to which you are headed. Pipe dreams are just fantasy, but faith dreams are real, because faith is real, the substance of things hoped

for. And we also know James wrote, "You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone" (James 2:24).

The Chinese say that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. Are you ready to take the first step or, if you have already, the next step in your faith journey. Are you prepared to take a step every day, no matter how many steps you have remaining between you and your dream? I hope so. If you are, then you are a candidate for greatness. If not, then all you may have is a pipe dream, and pipe dreams may make for good poetry, but they seldom achieve the end result. Have a great week!

## [404: Prenatal Purpose](#)

A few minutes ago, I was in the car with my wife and said, "I have given absolutely no thought to the Monday Memo this week." She said, "Time to pull out an old one?" I responded, "Nah. I think I'll write on prenatal purpose." So with no planning or outline, let's read on together and see what transpires. Last week I interrupted my series on PurposeParents to write about pipe dreams. Before we move on next week to Daniel, however, let's talk a little more about that topic -- PurposeParenting that is.

## ROLL CALL

There were five mothers in the Bible who had a good idea of their child's purpose before they were born. Their roll call includes:

1. **Rebekah.** She had twins who were struggling in her womb. When she inquired of the Lord as to what this meant, He told her about her two boys in [Genesis 25:21-28](#).
2. **Samson's mother.** She was told before he was born that her son would "begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines" ([Judges 13:5](#)).
3. **Hannah.** Hannah agonized over having a child and finally had Samuel, whom she dedicated to the Lord before he was ever born. Her son went on to do great things for God (see [1 Samuel 1 and 2](#)).
4. **Elizabeth.** Elizabeth knew her son was special, due to the unique circumstances surrounding his birth. What's more, John jumped for joy in Elizabeth's womb when he heard the voice of Mary, the mother of Jesus (see [Luke 1:39-45](#)).
5. **Mary.** Mary discovered quite a bit about Jesus before and right after He was born (see [Luke 1:26-33](#) and [Luke 2:21-38](#)).

## LESSONS FOR PARENTS

What can parents learn from these five examples of parents who had prenatal purpose awareness for their children?

1. God can reveal clues and directives about your child's purpose before he or she is born.
2. You can ask to see your child's purpose and God may show you.
3. Your child can be filled with the Holy Spirit and purpose before he or she is born.
4. Notice that all these PurposeParents were mothers. Mothers help give birth not just to children, but to purpose in children.
5. Your relationship with the Lord and your ability to hear from Him play key roles in knowing your child's purpose - and consequently them knowing it as well.
6. You play a key role in directing your child into his or her purpose.
7. Somehow, I think this same kind of information and impact is available to fathers and grandparents as well.

Finally, these five mothers did not know that their children would be doctors, lawyers or accountants. God did not speak to them about their child's job, but rather their child's role in the plan and economy of God. As parents you have a choice: to raise your children to be good cultural citizens or good citizens in God's kingdom. The former may get them a job; the latter will bring them into God's purpose. The choice is yours.

Shall I add your name to the roll call above as good PurposeParents. I hope so, for we need more PurposeParents and PurposeChildren to do the work that God has assigned for the generations ahead. Have a great week!

Feel free to add your comments or insights to this post on PurposeParents on the [site](#) where it is posted.

### **[405: Never Too Young](#)**

I have been writing to parents the last few weeks talking about what it takes to be a PurposeParent. Having taught thousands of people all around the world about purpose, I have come to a simple, but profound conclusion: there are no age restrictions when it comes to clarifying and fulfilling your purpose.

In some cases, I've found children, teenagers and young adults to be much more "in tune" with my purpose teaching than their adult counterparts. In fact, this young generation wants their purpose and they want it now. They are not willing, as their seniors were, to spend years paying their dues in a company or ministry in the hopes that eventually they will do something they enjoy that is related to their purpose. They want to know and fulfill their purpose as quickly as possible. Anything less is unacceptable for them.

I have an article on my website entitled *Never Too Young For Purpose* that runs through a list of young people in the Bible who were purpose driven. You can go to my [site](#) and read this article about Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Esther and many others. In each case, the Lord didn't speak to these young people about a career; He spoke to them about fulfilling their purpose—His will for their life. And all of them made a significant impact on the history not only of the church but also of the world.

Below are seven conclusions I came to that will help you fulfill your role as a PurposeParent or PurposeCoach.

1. Parents may play a key role.
2. Parents may not play a key role.
3. Purpose doesn't only apply to church work.
4. It's never too early to start a PurposeQuest.
5. Young people can and do hear God's voice.
6. Young people need to be prepared for the road ahead.
7. Young people need to see Jesus as a man of purpose.

I hope you find this helpful whether you are seeking purpose or helping others find theirs. In the meantime, if you have any other insights into being a PurposeParent, please don't hesitate to add them to this entry on the [site](#) where it is posted. Have a great week!