

WEEK 6

WHAT'S MY ROLE IN THE WORLD?

GOD'S PROJECT

Over the last five weeks we've seen how the whole Bible can be understood as one big story of God in five major episodes:



Hopefully this has been helpful in seeing the big picture of God's Story. But you might be left wondering: OK, so now what do we do? How should this five-episode story of the Bible shape our lives in practice? That's what these last three weeks are all about! If we trace through the 5 episodes of God's Story, we see a recurring pattern in every episode: God's people in God's place on God's project. (So 5 Cs contain 3 Ps!) But what it means to be God's people in God's place on God's project is different in each episode. The practical take away for us comes when we're able to identify God's people/place/project specifically in our episode, episode 4...

We start with God's project. Throughout all five episodes of God's Story, God is on a project to display his glorious goodness. In each episode, God gives humans a special role to play in that project. But the role he gives people is actually different in each episode. Adam and Eve had a role in displaying God's glorious goodness. So did Israel. So did Jesus Christ. But their roles were all different, and so is ours now. It turns out we all have a role to play in God's project, a role that should give purpose and meaning to our entire lives. And it's by tracing God's project through the five episodes that we get to see exactly what our role in God's project really is...

LOOKING BACK

EPISODE 1 - CREATION

1. From Genesis 1 (sidebar), what was humanity's originally intended role in God's creation project?

Is this our role now? What's different for us? Why?

EPISODE 2 - COVENANT

2. Adam and Eve rejected their role in God's creation project, with disastrous results for all humanity and creation. From Deuteronomy 4 (sidebar), what was Israel's role in getting God's creation project back on track?

Is this our role now? What's different for us? Why?

EPISODE 3 - CHRIST

3. Because Israel had corrupted hearts like everyone else, they didn't keep God's laws. They effectively rejected their role in God's project, just like Adam and Eve. From Galatians 3 (sidebar), what did Jesus do to fix this?

Is this our role now? What's different for us? Why?

GENESIS 1

26 God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

DEUTERONOMY 4

Moses says to Israel:

5 See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it.⁶ Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."⁷ What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him?⁸ And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?⁹ Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

GALATIANS 3

10 All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." [Deut 27:26]...¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." [Deut 21:23]¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that

ROMANS 8

28 We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

MATTHEW 28

After his resurrection, Jesus said to his disciples:

18 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

JOHN 13

Just as Jesus was about to die for his disciples, he said to them:

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

REVELATION 21

1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"...

LOOKING FORWARD

Jesus is the one who gets God's project back on track! In his death on the cross, Jesus took the curse for sin on himself and brought it to an end. Then Jesus rose from death to bless people with new hearts by the Spirit. So New Covenant followers of Jesus now really can obey God from the heart and display God's goodness, much like Jesus himself. That's our part in God's project in Episode 4...

4. According to Romans 8 (sidebar), what's God's ultimate purpose for your life?

5. According to Matthew 28 (sidebar), what do followers of Jesus need to do for other people? Where do we get the power to do this?

6. It seems there's two aspects to our role in God's project: becoming more like Jesus and sharing Jesus with more people. From John 13 (sidebar), how do these two aspects work together?

7. Let's peek ahead to Episode 5. From Revelation 21-22 (sidebars), what will God do in the New Creation? What will we do? How is this similar to now? How is it different?

LOOKING AT OURSELVES

8. Let's get concrete now. In light of our New Covenant role in God's project, which of the following would make a good 'mission statement' for a church? For each of them, why or why not? (some might be partly helpful but not completely!)

'We need to be culturally active. When we fulfill humanity's creation mandate in art and science then God will be glorified and the world will be blessed.'

'We need to be politically active. When Australia's laws align with ancient Israel's then God will be glorified and our nation will be blessed.'

'We need to restore and protect the city of Jerusalem. When we bless the land of Israel God will be glorified and the world will be blessed.'

'We need to eradicate poverty. God will be glorified when we share his blessings equally.'

'We need to be more and more like Jesus ourselves and draw more and more people to follow Jesus with us. That's how God is glorified and the world is blessed.'

REVELATION 22

3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

9. Is following and sharing Jesus the main focus of your life right now? What gets the best of your time and energy? What do you daydream about? What do you pray about most?

10. How could you refocus on Jesus to play your part in God's project? If you think about it, every area of life is one in which you could follow and share Jesus more. What are some practical ways you could follow and share Jesus more in each of these areas of life?

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| Family | Holidays | Environmental care |
| Work | Sport | Community care |
| Retirement | Politics | Your own biggest passion |

It's a powerful idea: God created us for a purpose. It means our lives are not meaningless accidents. It's an immense privilege to not only be saved from sin but saved to play our part in God's project. And as New Covenant believers there are so many good things to do as part of that project! When we show love and forgiveness to our family members and workmates, we're being like Jesus. When we work hard for our family or our team to benefit them more than ourselves, we're being like Jesus. When we push for laws that protect the vulnerable and oppressed, we're being like Jesus. When we're having fun and thanking Jesus for it, we're glorifying Jesus. When we're taking care of what Jesus has made, the world and everyone in it, we're glorifying Jesus. And when we put God's goodness on display in all these ways, it gives us more opportunity to share Jesus more compellingly with others. All these good things should contribute to God's project, as long as we don't let them become our ultimate purpose themselves. Let's pray that together, in every area of life, we can become more and more like Jesus ourselves and draw more and more people to follow Jesus with us. Let's pray that the God who gave us his Son to save us would be glorified in our lives as he truly deserves!