

# April 2005: The Purpose For What We Do

by Aaron Greenway

Several days ago, a young woman by the name of Terri Schiavo died. Years ago, she was a vibrant woman. But one day, she had a stroke and spent the next several years in the hospital. Based on the word of her husband, the Highest Court in the land decided to "honor" Terri's wishes to die if something were to ever occur. In the Courts' opinion, it was "just" for this woman to die because that is what she would have wanted. And so they removed her feeding tube and within 14 days, she died of starvation and dehydration.

Even more recently we have been hearing the news of the death of Pope John Paul II. This man staunchly opposed abortion, reached out to all peoples and played a huge part in the fall of the world-wide, communist empire. Probably more than any pope in the history of the world, this man has had an incredible impact on the morals of many. I have to admit that I liked the pope as a person.

However, in both cases we see that our view of justice and righteousness is not necessarily God's view. Come to find out, Terri Schiavo never received an MRI, a major brain scan necessary to determine her condition conclusively. She never received rehabilitation. Her husband had been trying for years to kill her. His comment to the nursing staff one day was, "When is that \*\*\*\*\* going to die?" And even though Pope John Paul seemed to stand for many things, he still succumbed to the politics of the Roman Catholic institution, giving more support and credit to the Virgin Mary than any other Pope in history.

To this day, we don't know where Terri Schiavo is, nor the Pope. Several of us from the church were praying for both to be saved before they went into eternity (if they weren't already). The Pope knew the Bible and quite possibly he repented before he died. We hope this is the case. Someone once said, "My pastor told us one time that heaven will be full of surprises. There will be people there we thought would never get there, and there will be people we thought would be there that we will never see."

Some of the people you go to church with, who are involved in every church activity, lead a growth group, go to prayer every morning, will not make it to heaven. This is because (consciously or subconsciously) they believe that their own righteousness will get them to heaven. And this is the very thing that will condemn them, as they slap

**Why do we serve in the church?** When we are saved, we must realize that it is Jesus and Jesus only. He must increase; I must decrease. And we continue decreasing while He is increasing. It doesn't stop at salvation. This puts us on an even-plain with other Christians. All of the sudden, we no longer need their approval to be fulfilled in ourselves. We are trusting God with the details of our lives. And we serve Him because of what He has done for us and because of what He is doing in our lives. Because in the long-run, He is all we really have.

the free gift of God in the face. And then there are those who have lived a sinful life and God rescued them at the last moment before they took their last breath.

Remember the thief on the cross? In Luke 23:42 - He said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Jesus answered, "Today, you will be with me in paradise."

We don't know where we will be tomorrow. But what is the purpose for what we do? Do we go to church to win brownie points with God? Do we serve just to be with our friends and to look good in front of them? I decided a while ago that I would not do anything for the Lord for the purpose of appearing to be someone I am not in front of others. For this reason, I have never really been good at playing politics. Instead, I want to serve Christ out of a true devotion, a pure love, and an unwavering passion to know Him. Granted, there are times that I may serve Him when I am not feeling that sense of passion. But I should never use God as a cloak to serve my own interests.

The Apostle Paul said it just right when he said, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

This is why I pray for a passion for Jesus and a love for others, because without the Holy Spirit weaving those things into my life, I am the most selfish human being on the planet. If I am operating in the flesh, I can lead a growth group at my church and appear to be a spiritual leader, but maybe my goal is so that people will pat me on the back. I can sing in the choir, but maybe my motive is to be seen. Maybe I can be the head pastor, but maybe I am looking to make money. Usually, those who have an agenda are bound by money, fame (or man's approval), or sex. And they are very protective of their turf. Someone who is in a spiritual leadership position who has an agenda can become very fiesty if his territory is being threatened.

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Something to ponder...

Your brother,  
Aaron Greenway