

Text: [Proverbs 8:22-31 \(CEB\)](#)

Date: June 16, 2024 – Music Appreciation Sunday / Father’s Day

Title: “Playing with Purpose” > On Purpose Series

Theme: We can often find our purpose in that which feels less like work and more like play.

You would be surprised at the number of piano donations I’ve
turned down as a pastor
I mean, it’s been a lot
In the past 10 years, at least half a dozen, maybe more
We just can’t use that many
So if you were thinking about sending me an email about the one
in your living room, please don’t

There was a time when having a piano at home was a sign of
status and culture
“We make music in this house”
And people would play and sing for family gatherings, for
Christmas parties
But now, we just ask Siri or Alexa to put something on for us
It’s a lot easier that way
We leave music to the pros

Today, it seems to me amateur musicians have two primary
outlets for their talent: Churches and karaoke bars
Notice how one of those involves a place where we find a little
help in setting inhibitions aside
You wanna sing or play in church, until you get used to it, you just
have to white knuckle it, sorry!
So I am grateful to those who lead us week by week
<Thanks>

I feel like we have so few outlets for many of the things that
interest us because over time,

As a society we've decided that unless we can be pro-level at something, it's not worth doing
We've lost sight of the joy of doing something for its own sake
Just because it makes us happy
And so, we're at this place where people call churches and try to donate their pianos

Contrast this with when we're kids: we have no problem spending hours doing things we enjoy
Even if we're not the best at them

But it feels like as we become adults
Many, if not most, of us outgrow our hobbies
If it doesn't earn us money or produce a result
Even if that result is just for someone else to say: "That's really good"

We don't have time for it
And that's sad
Because what we end up with is a life with so much less joy than we might otherwise experience

When we insist that everything in our lives has to have a purpose
We may very well be missing one of the most important dimensions of purpose

This passage of scripture that we read today has some unique features
If you read all of Proverbs chapter 8
You learn that divine wisdom, personified as a woman, is the one doing the speaking

“I was there when God established the heavens
And marked out the horizon on the deep sea,
When God thickened the clouds above
And secured the fountains of the deep”

“I was beside God as a master of crafts.
I was having fun...
Smiling, frolicking, and delighting in the human race”

God’s creative power is personified with joy
With laughter
With play

Kate has been spending a lot of time reading and thinking on this
topic lately – the topic of play
And we can’t help but notice that this is exactly what adults lose
as they grow up
We stop singing, we stop dancing, we stop making art, we stop
playing games
Because it’s not fitting for adults

Sure, we use the *idea* of play to sell things
Notice today how many ads on Father’s Day will show Dads
laughing, playing with their kids...
And maybe, if we’re lucky, we do play for a little bit again when
our kids are small
But before long, it’s back to work
We perceive purpose is all about work – it’s a serious
conversation for serious people

Well, I want to argue for something different today
Through the lens of the scripture
Imagine, for a moment, God’s creative, uninhibited side laughing
with delight while giving us:

The giraffe – all neck and legs – and that crazy pattern
Or a kangaroo – what's with that? The world needs an animal that
carries its baby around in a pouch, right?
Or a sloth – because, you know, someone needs to be able to
testify that speed isn't everything?

What is wrong with doing something just because it's fun and you
want to do it?

God doesn't seem to have a problem with it

I could argue that music has no inherent purpose
Its not, strictly speaking, necessary
During the Protestant Reformation, the most radical wing pushed
for churches to tear out their organs – frivolity!

And yet I would be willing to bet that almost every significant
moment in your life has a soundtrack associated with it
That there is at least one song that if I play it for you, will cause
you to break down and get nostalgic to the point of tears

God's purpose for us is much bigger than that which achieves an
end or accomplishes something great
Often that purpose is not found in our work
Instead, it's often found in that which gives us joy
Just because it does
Not because we're the greatest
Not because anyone would necessarily pay to hear us sing,
or buy a picture we've painted,
or hire us to build something for them

But rather because when we learn to let go and play
We are becoming the truest versions of ourselves
Beings created for joy and for connection with God and each
other

So this week, I want you to consider:
What do you do just because it gives you joy?
Have you given that thing the time and attention it deserves?

Because purpose is bigger than that which achieves an end or
accomplishes something great
Often, purpose is found in that which gives us joy
Just because

Amen.

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