

1. We're talking about "Unity Killers". Things that destroy unity in our homes, in our marriages, in a work setting and even in the church.
2. We said last week that there are two things we know for sure about the way God made us.
3. We were created to be unified or to become one with God and we were created to be unified with others.
4. The reason for that is simple. None of us alone has what it takes to produce wholeness and completeness in our lives. We were created by God to enjoy complete life. Full life. Abundant life. But in order for us to experience that whole life we need the spirit of God living inside of us to make up our deficiencies and we need others to do the same.
5. There are no self-made people. I think we proved that with our question. If you don't need anybody else then how were you born?
6. We need to become unified with others but the first thing we said that will kill that unity is selfishness.
7. Paul needed to correct the Corinthian believers because when they would have a meal to commemorate the Lord's Supper, some who had food would go ahead and eat in front of those who didn't have anything.
8. Others would get drunk and waste their money on booze while others in the church suffered.
9. In truth there were people in the church who were selfish. They were most concerned with their self rather than the good of the whole.
10. We said it last week but it bears repeating. Whether it be in a marriage, in a home, in the church, at your job, on the ball field, anywhere where there is more than one person, when someone becomes more concerned with what they want rather than the good of the group then disunity and discord are not far behind.
11. Paul said to the Corinthians there are divisions among you. The selfishness of a few is causing there to be division, detachment and disunity.
12. This morning I want us to consider another unity killer. To help us identify what it is we are going to consider the story of Zacchaeus in Luke chapter 19.

**TEXT:** **Luke 19:1-10** Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. **3** He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. **4** So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. **5** When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "**Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.**" **6** So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. **7** All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a "sinner." **8** But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." **9** Jesus said to him, "**Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.**"

**TITLE:** **Loss of purpose!**

**INTRO:**

1. The next unity killer in this series occurs when we lose a clear understanding of what the purpose is of the group or the whole. Again, this can be applied to a marriage, a family, a job setting, a church setting, anywhere people come together for a common purpose.
2. Let's take a moment and consider what the word purpose means.  
**Purpose:** the reason for which something exists, is done, made or used.
3. I want that to sink in for a moment. The reason for which something exists. I believe we would be wise to let that work its way down deep in our soul because it is apparent to me if you look around that there are billions of people who are living life with no purpose.
4. In other words, they don't know the reason for which they exist. They have lost sight of their purpose in life.
5. Now before you attempt to fill in the blank and come up with your own answer I think it's only fair that we look to the one who actually created mankind in the first place to find our purpose.
6. God created mankind with a purpose. We were made for a purpose. I'll give you a hint. We were made for a whole lot more than just using up resources and working at a job for 40 years and retiring and then dying.
- 7.** We find our purpose in scripture as God himself identifies the reason why we exist. We exist to glorify God. **Isaiah 43:6-7** Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—**7** everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

8. Remember last week we read from the book of Genesis and we found that we were created in God's image. Verse seven says that we are called by His name. In other words, in creation He is our father and we are his sons and daughters.
9. But in order to stay in right relationship with our heavenly father we must be willing to submit to his purpose for our lives. We were created in God's image according to verse seven and we were created for God's glory.
10. But what does it mean to glorify? It means to praise; to magnify and honor in worship; to ascribe honor to, in thought or words. **Psalm 86:9** All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name.
11. We glorify God when we worship him. When we honor him and magnify him as high and worthy of praise.
12. But glorifying God is not something we do just on Sunday's when we get together. We glorify God by our very lives.
13. **1 Corinthians 10:31** So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
14. Every part of our lives is to bring glory to God. You exist to glorify God.
15. If you are living your life for any other reason, you are missing it. Not only are you missing the point and the purpose you are missing all of the blessings that come as a result of being committed to God's purpose for your life.
16. Somebody here today has been wandering through life aimlessly without any purpose. That purpose is only found through faith and relationship in Jesus Christ. You can't find it anywhere else so stop trying.
17. Not only can we not have purpose when we don't submit to the Lord, it is extremely difficult for us to help fulfill purpose with others.
18. In other words, groups are to have purpose as well. And there cannot be unity in the group if the group, as a whole, is not fulfilling its purpose.
19. Let's look at the example of Jesus' visit to Zacchaeus' house from the book of Luke.
20. By now Jesus is very well known and wherever he goes there is a crowd of people gathering around him.

21. This particular day was no different. However, on this day something was very different. A man by the name of Zacchaeus, being a short man, climbs a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus.
22. But Zacchaeus wasn't just anybody. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. Tax collectors were notorious for cheating people out of their money by charging more than a fair tax and keeping the access for themselves.
23. Two things to note about Zacchaeus. First of all he must have been good at his job because verse two tells us that he was wealthy.
24. The second thing about Zacchaeus is that not only was he a despised scoundrel to the people around him, since he was the chief tax collector, he was also good at leading a whole group of scoundrels in cheating and stealing from people.
25. Because of their mistreatment of their own countrymen, tax collectors were considered to be the lowest scum of the world.
26. Now so far Jesus hasn't ruffled any feathers. There is a crowd of people around him. Zacchaeus is up in the tree trying to get a peek at Jesus. Nothing major yet.
27. The problem comes in however, when Jesus stops at the tree Zacchaeus is in and tells him to come down from there because Jesus wants to stay the night at his house.
28. Imagine with me the reaction of the crowd around Jesus as I read this next verse of scripture. **Luke 19:7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a "sinner."**
29. Boy did the gossip mill start spinning. That word mutter means to complain, murmur or grumble.
30. In other words these were not happy sounds.
31. Prior to this moment there is unity in the group. Everybody is happy and excited to be around Jesus. I mean after all, they never knew what kind of miracle Jesus was going to perform next.
32. But the moment Jesus asked Zacchaeus to spend the night at his house that unity went right out the window. They were no longer one. They were no longer enjoying the moment. There was no more anticipation of something good to happen. There was muttering and murmuring and complaining going on.

33. What does Jesus think he's doing? This man is a sinner. In fact he is the worst kind of sinner. Jesus how in the world could you go spend the night at this man's house.
34. But I am convinced that the reason there was so much complaining and muttering and murmuring was because the people in the crowd that day, probably including the disciples, had forgotten Jesus' purpose for being here on earth.
35. Without a clear purpose what Jesus did made no sense whatsoever. But when there was a clear understanding of Jesus' purpose for being on the planet, his going to Zacchaeus' house made perfect sense.
36. We know this was a misunderstanding of purpose because Jesus had to stop and take the time to remind them of His purpose.
37. **Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."**
38. The phrase Son of Man was a phrase Jesus commonly used to describe himself.
39. Jesus wants to make it very clear to his listeners. I came to earth to seek and save those who were lost.
40. In that phrase Jesus makes his purpose abundantly clear. I came from heaven to the earth to seek and save the lost.
41. And I can almost hear him saying. Now do you understand why I'm going to Zacchaeus' house to spend the night? I'm going there because Zacchaeus is lost. Guys like him are the reason why I came to earth in the first place.
42. It is true that selfishness will cause an immediate loss of unity, but one of the causes of selfishness is when we lose sight of the purpose for which the group exists. The people crowding around Jesus had completely lost sight of Jesus' purpose. His reason for existing.
43. So because we are all at risk of losing sight of the purpose of things, I want to give you a few examples.

## **Marriage.**

1. Let's first consider what the purpose of marriage is. Again, we are going to use the only authority on marriage there is and that is the bible. And since God created man and woman and gave them to one another then he is the authority.
2. First of all **God created marriage to reflect His image.**

3. Marriage, good godly marriage, is supposed to be a reflection of the image of God himself. **Genesis 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
4. It takes both the male and the female to reflect the image of God. Just one sex or the other is incomplete. It takes both. Marriage at its best is to be a reflection of God himself. And that reflection is only a true reflection when the husband and wife are unified.
5. Secondly, **God created marriage as the only environment to reproduce children in His likeness.**
6. **Genesis 1:28** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number;
7. A Godly marriage is the vessel through which God brings wonderful, beautiful children and grandchildren and so forth.
8. One of the most spiritual things you will ever witness is a baby being born. It is an absolute miracle. There is nothing like it.
9. God created marriage through which to bring continuous miracles to the earth.
10. And thirdly, **God created marriage to reign in spiritual warfare.** Let's read the rest of verse 28.
11. **Genesis 1:28** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."
12. It was through this filling of the earth that there would be sufficient numbers of human beings to subdue the earth and to rule over the animals of the earth.
13. This third purpose, though it might seem carnal is really not. It is spiritual. Mankind is better able to win spiritual battle when we wage war together rather than separately.
14. Now those are three biblical purposes of marriage. Now let's imagine what happens when one of those spouses loses sight of the purpose of marriage.
15. What kind of damage is going to be done when one spouse thinks that marriage is so he can have sex whenever he wants? Or so there is someone to clean up after him.
16. What kind of damage is done one spouse thinks all her husband is good for is providing what she wants or desires or giving her security.

17. What damage is done to the raising of kids when they are not viewed as gifts from God to be raised as God sees fit?
18. What kind of damage is done when rather than standing shoulder to shoulder, taking on the world, that couple stands toe to toe taking on one another with screaming and fighting and hitting and cursing?
19. The reality is, when we lose sight of what the purpose of marriage is things get rough quickly.

### **Church.**

1. Let's consider the purpose of the church. Again, we will turn to the bible as our authority.
2. Jesus, before he was to leave his earthly ministry in the hands of the disciples he had invested in had this to say to them in **Matthew 28:19-20** *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.*
3. We call this passage of scripture the Great Commission. In other words it is the supreme purpose statement of the church. It's why we exist. Again that purpose is three-fold.
4. First, **make disciples of all nations**. That involves reaching out to the lost.
5. Secondly, **baptizing them in the name of the father and the son and of the Holy Spirit**. In other words help them make the transition from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive.
6. And thirdly, **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**. Don't just leave these newborn baby Christians to fend for themselves; teach them the way they should go and how to grow.
7. That is our purpose as the church in a nutshell. We could probably add a few more things to that but basically that is it.
8. The only way the church can be unified and live in wholeness and completeness is if every person who claims to be a part of the church is helping the church fulfill the purpose for which it was created.
9. And that unity will only continue to grow and exist when nothing else takes a higher priority than its purpose.
10. That doesn't mean there are no other priorities, but it for sure means that nothing can become a greater priority than our purpose.
11. Having nice clean facilities is a priority. But it is never a higher priority than discipling, baptizing and teaching.

12. Types of worship and styles and colors and places to sit and handling of finances and wardrobe and all the things we could add to the list are priorities, but not one of them is a greater priority than discipling, baptizing and teaching.
13. As long as our purpose is in clear view and everyone is doing their fair share to achieve that purpose then there can be unity, but that unity will be destroyed when someone picks their own priority and tries to place it above what God has commissioned us to do.

### **Everything else.**

1. This principle can be applied to any setting you are in. A ball team. A work environment. A friendship. A social club. You name it.
2. The only way to have unity is to identify what the purpose of that group is and then ensure that everyone is working toward that goal.
3. I worked at a job where a guy who had been with the company for about 10 years was fired.
4. The company had a purpose statement. Make a quality product, serve our customers efficiently and bring a healthy return to our investors.
5. That was their purpose statement. Let's just call him Bob. Bob got fired.
6. People complained; oh I can't believe it. Bob was such a great guy. He was the life of the party. He was always telling jokes. He was so fun to be around.
7. Now, I have to admit. All of those things were true about Bob. But none of those was the issue. Bob wasn't faithful to show up to work on time. He always wanted to leave early. He neglected his customers quite often and people were getting frustrated with him.
8. Bob developed a drinking problem and it impaired his ability to perform his duties. The product wasn't being delivered in a timely manner, the customers weren't satisfied and Bob ceased to be worth the investment his company was making in him.
9. Bob had to be let go. I think most of us understand that in a business environment.
10. But **what about life?**



## Conclusion:

1. You can't just let go of life. You can let go of a job and a marriage but chances are you are going to have the same problems later on down the road.
2. You can let go of kids you have brought into the world but doing so will only hinder and damage their life.
3. God wants to bring unity and completeness and wholeness to our lives. He wants us to get off the downward spiral of bad choices and failed relationships and messes left.
4. He wants us to be unified with him. To be one with him.
5. And the place that begins is by living out the purpose for which we were created.
6. **You were created to glorify God.** You were created for relationship with him.
7. Are you in right relationship with Jesus? Salvation call.
8. **Are you living out your purpose in life?** Does the way you live your life bring glory to God?
9. No one is off the hook today. All of us need to examine ourselves. Are we living out God's purpose for our lives or do we need help?
10. What part am I playing in the church that helps the church fulfill its purpose? To make disciples. Baptize. Teach.
11. Is every other thing in the church in its proper place in relation to those things.