

What is the Purpose of life
through Gospel Lenses?

SoCM

What Lenses Are You Wearing?

- Everyone views life through a set of lenses or worldviews. A worldview is a set of “Presuppositions which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides foundation on which we live” (James Sire)
- Worldview questions:
 - Metaphysical—what is ultimate reality?
 - Anthropological—what is a human being?
 - Theological—does God exist?
 - Epistemological—is it possible to know truth?
 - Ethical—what is morally right and wrong?
 - Eschatological—how happens when we die?

Do You Know God?

- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jn 1:1)
- Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent (Jn 17:3)
- We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands (1 Jn 2:3)

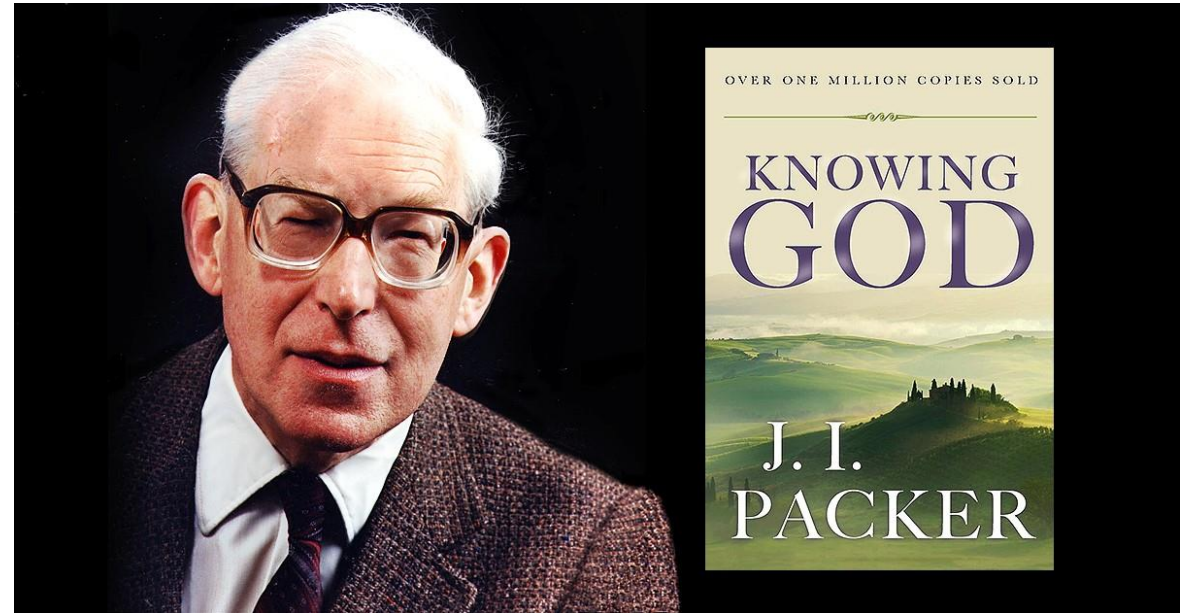
Do You Know God?

Know the distinction between knowing about God and actually knowing God

Move our knowledge from our head to our heart

Take what we learn *about* God into praise *to* God

Translate content to real life application

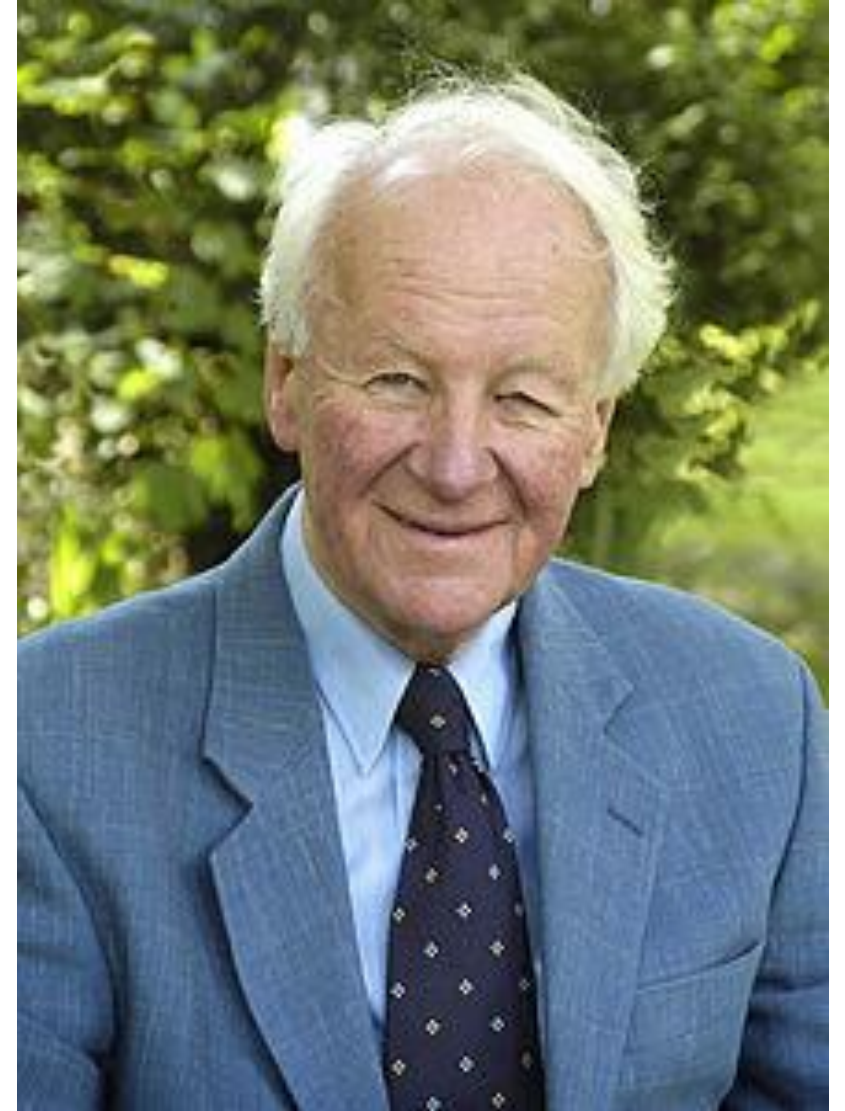


Are You Like Jesus?

- What is God's purpose for his people?
- "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever"
(Westminster Shorter Catechism)
- "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31)
- "God wants his people to become like Jesus—Christlikeness is the will of God for the people of God" (Stott 2010, 32)

Rev John Stott

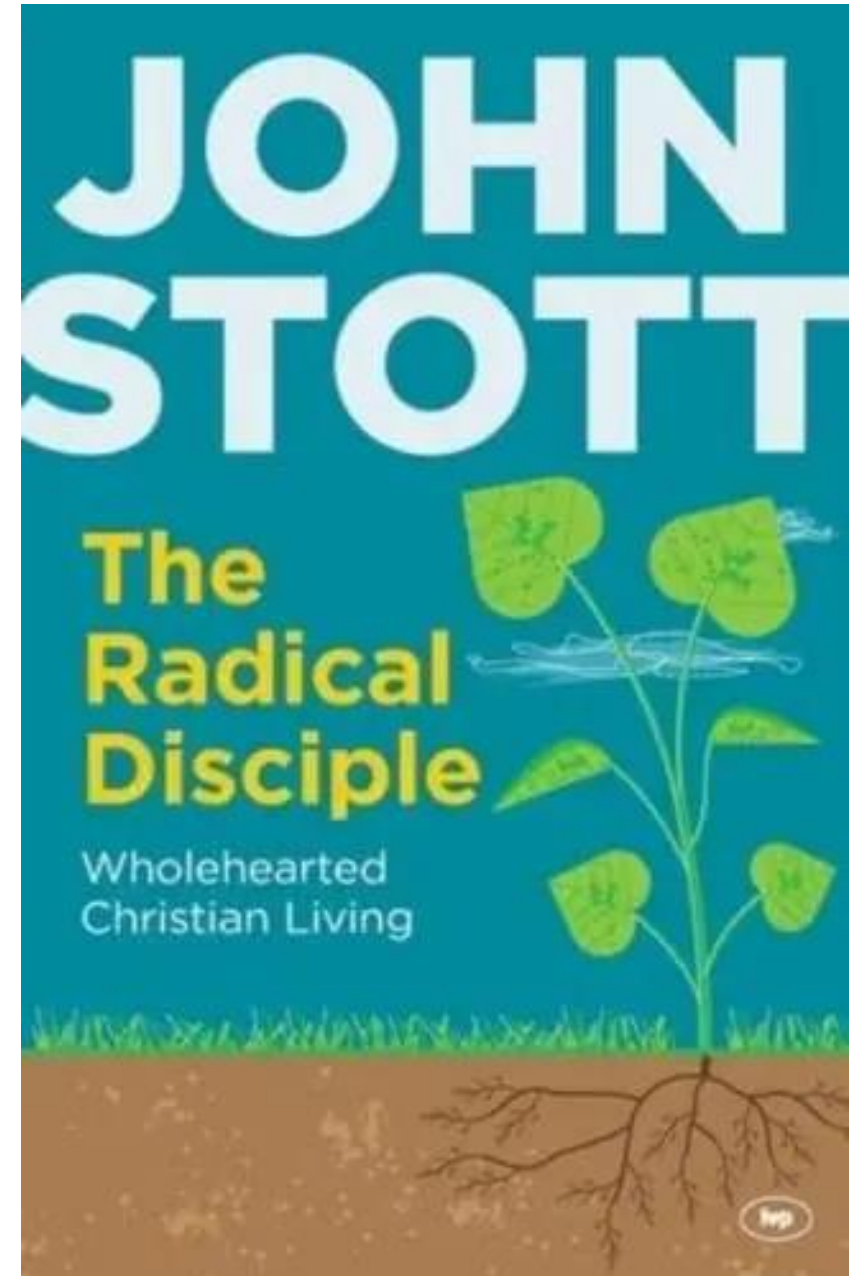
- 1921-2011
- Anglican pastor
- Theologian and author of over 50 books
- Chief framer of the Lausanne Covenant, 1974
- “As an architect of 20th century evangelicalism, who shaped the faith of a generation, he explained complex theology in a way laypeople could easily understand”



John Stott: *The Radical Disciple*

In his final publication, John Stott describes the Christian disciple by exploring:

- (1) The biblical basis for the call to Christlikeness
- (2) (2)The NT characteristics of Christlikeness



The Call to Christlikeness

- **Past tense:** “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” (Rom 8:29)
- **Present tense:** “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are **being transformed** into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18)
- **Future tense:** “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we **shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn 3:2)
- Christian discipleship is both a ***point*** and a ***process*** in which people follow Christ and become more like him

Like Him in His Incarnation

- **Humility and dying to self** are key spiritual qualities of a disciple
- ⁵ In your relationships with one another, **have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:** ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Phil 2:5-8; cf. Gal 2:20)

Like Him in His Service

- Disciples are to be like Jesus in his **sacrificial service**
- “So he got up from the meal, took off his outer garment, and wrapped a towel around his waist. He poured water into a basin and washed his disciples’ feet. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place, and said, Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set an example **that you should do as I have done for you**” (Jn 13:4-17)
- Notice the words: “that you should do as I have done for you”

Like Him in His Love

- We are to be **like Christ in his love**
- ¹ “Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and **walk in the way of love**, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph 5:1-2)
- Walk in love refers to the command that all our behaviors should be characterized by love
- Why? Because Jesus first loved us by giving himself to us

Like Him in His Patient Endurance

- Due to our Christian witness, we are to be like Jesus in **his patient endurance** when we are persecuted for the gospel
- ²⁰ “But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, **that you should follow in his steps**” (1 Pt 2:20-21)

Like Him in His Mission

- We need to be like Christ and **committed to his mission**
- “Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you’” (Jn 20:21)
- “As you sent me into the world, I have **sent them into the world**” (Jn 17:18)
- The key words are “sent them into the world.”
- That means we are enter into other people’s worlds by incarnation evangelism. All authentic mission is incarnational mission

Christlikeness and Suffering

- Suffering is a huge subject in itself, and there are many ways in which Christians try to understand it
- But one stands out—suffering is part of God’s process of making us like Christ
- And 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 (Rom 8:28-29)
- God is always working for the good purpose of his people—to make us like Christ

Living Out the Gospel: Phil 4:4-23

- Resolve to rejoice in the Lord
- Resolve to be gentle to others
- Resolve not to be anxious about anything
- Resolve to think holy thoughts
- Resolve to be content
- Resolve to grow in gratitude

Conclusion

- Becoming more like Christ involves the whole person—being (character), knowing (Bible), doing (service), and relationship (community)
- Suffering is part of God's process of making us like Christ (Rom 8:28-29)
- Christian transformation is possible because God has given us the Holy Spirit to dwell in us to change us from within
- The effectiveness of evangelism depends to a large extent whether we look like Christ or not

Discussion Questions

- Do you sense a disconnect between God's purpose for your life and your own agenda in life?
- What is the most difficult part of Christian discipleship for you?
- What decision will you resolve to make in growing to become more like Christ?

Reading Resources

- Packer, JI, *Knowing God* (Glen Ellyn, IL: IVP, 1973)
- Michael J Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992)
- Scot McKnight, *Turning to Jesus* (Louisville: WJK, 2002)
- John Stott, *The Radical Disciple* (England: IVP, 2010)