

JULY 2005—*Making Sense of Our Lives*

All of us have times when we wonder why certain things are happening to us, or where our lives are going. Amid the swift and varied changes of this life, we sometimes become perplexed, other times discouraged or dismayed. We may even ask, “What in the world is God doing, what is the purpose in all of this?”

Is there any way to make sense of our lives in such times? Yes. If we could somehow see the larger purposes at work in our lives, it would help us make sense of our present experience. C.S. Lewis helps us to do just that:

I think that many of us, when Christ has enabled us to overcome one or two sins that were an obvious nuisance, are inclined to feel (though we do not put it into words) that we are now good enough. He has done all we wanted Him to do, and we should be obliged if He would now leave us alone. As we say ‘I never expected to be a saint, I only wanted to be a decent ordinary chap.’ And we imagine when we say this that we are being humble.

But this is the fatal mistake. Of course we never wanted, and never asked, to be made into the sort of creatures He is going to make us into. But the question is not what we intended ourselves to be, but what He intended us to be when He made us. He is the inventor, we are only the machine. He is the painter, we are only the picture. How should we know what He means us to be like? You see, He has already made us something very different from what we were. Long ago, before we were born, when we were inside our mothers’ bodies, we passed through various stages. We were once rather like vegetables, and once rather like fish: it was only at a later stage that we became like human babies. And if we had been conscious at those earlier stages, I daresay we should have been quite contented to stay as vegetables or fish—should not have wanted to be made into babies. But all the time He knew His plan for us and was determined to carry it out. Something the same is now happening at a higher level. We may be content to remain what we call ‘ordinary people’: but He is determined to carry out a quite different plan. To shrink back from that plan is not humility: it is laziness and cowardice. To submit to it is not conceit or megalomania; it is obedience.¹

Once we come to a living faith in Jesus Christ, God’s purpose for us is transformation into Christ-likeness. Jesus, after all, is the *firstborn* of God’s many children. Everything that touches our lives, whether good or bad, becomes an opportunity to be shaped into Christ’s image and likeness. And the key to whether that happens in any given case is whether we embrace God’s ultimate purpose in “the obedience of faith.”

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him.

And he gave them right standing with himself, and he promised them his glory.

ROMANS 8:28-30 NLT

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, a division of Simon & Schuster, 1996), pp. 175.