

CHOOSING PURPOSE

More than ever, we see how people all around us follow different religions. In fact, we're beginning to see more and more of this diversity in many of our schools and neighborhoods.

While most of us have been raised in a particular religious tradition, there is a tendency for a number of people today to grow up no longer identifying with traditional religious institutions, preferring to label themselves "spiritual" rather than "religious."

Some have even become skeptical of religion, choosing an almost entirely secular worldview. Yet whatever they choose, one thing is sure: Many young people continue to ask questions about the meaning of their lives and their purpose in this world: Who am I? What am I living for? How can I make a difference?

These are life-defining questions.

There are many ways of answering these important questions. There are many doors we can choose from and each one leads to a different place. The door we choose--the way we answer this question--will have a huge impact on our lives and make a difference in the way we live.

So we need to choose carefully. But how do we choose?

You could say that there are generally three ways that we can make these choices, and they are represented by three types of doors.

The first type we can call The Door of "What Feels Good." It's the door that makes us choose based on what feels good.

It's the old "Pleasure and Pain Principle." Do what feels good. And don't do what hurts! It's the most fashionable way of choosing today.

But when we choose this door, we are choosing only based on our instincts, and that, when you think about it, it's an essential survival instinct but it makes us no different from other animals.

Our decision may feel right at first, but because our only consideration has been what feels good, what we choose may not necessarily lead to something good in the long run.

The second type of door we can pick out may be named The Door of the Good

Here we're no longer choosing based only on what feels good and what does not, but according to what is actually good. In other words, we choose what is actually right and reject what is actually wrong.

No longer are we following the Pleasure and Pain principle. We now choose based on a higher principle: Morality.

This is a better way to make choices. When we strive to be moral, when we try to do the right thing, our decisions can yield good fruits. We not only try to live a morally upright life, but we also end up helping those around us.



There is, however, yet a third door. And we can call this last door the Door of the Greater Good. When we select this door, we are aiming not just for what feels good, not even for what is good, but rather, for something better.

We are no longer happy to settle for what is good. We now want to aim for what we regard as the Greater Good.

Once we begin to choose this way, we have reached the level of discernment.

For example, when we decide to serve others, to go an extra mile to be “a person for others,” we are not bound by moral duties. We are doing it out of magis, out of our commitment to the greater good.

It is when we engage in discernment, when we seek the Greater Good in making our choices that we can discover our higher purpose because it is the Greater Good that will give meaning to our lives.

For those who believe, the Greater Good we seek, what gives meaning and purpose to our lives, is called God’s Will.

It is through patient and persistent discernment that we can discover our higher purpose and in the process, perhaps find our way to God?

How can we be more discerning in this age and time?

How can we beyond what feels good to seek what is truly the greater good?

How can we find real meaning and real purpose in our lives?