

Introduction:

- Twenty-four year old Nejdra Nance grew up in Bridgeport, CT, in a family where she never quite felt she belonged, so much so that she spent time searching missing persons websites looking for an answer. Then one day she came across the picture of 19 day old Carlina White who disappeared from her hospital bed on August 4, 1987. As she looked at the pictures she became convinced that she must be this missing child. She reached out to the missing baby's mother, Joy White, and with the help of the NYPD and DNA testing, it was confirmed that Nejdra Nance was really Carlina White. It all started with a "feeling" that she just didn't belong. The nagging feeling lead to a search. Says Nance's biological grandmother, Elizabeth White, 71. "She searched, and then she found Joy." **APPLICATION** As human beings, we were made for fellowship with God; we were made to be part of His eternal family. Until we come into relationship with Him, we sense in our spirits a nagging feeling that something isn't quite right. Some may suppress those feelings, but if we are honest with ourselves we know that we do not belong in this world apart from relationship with God. So we search for answers; we search for truth. And when we do, God does not disappoint. He promises that, "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). And when we find Him and are restored to proper relationship with Him, we find our true place of belonging, and with it we find joy! "*Let all those who are looking for You be glad and have joy in You . . .*" (Psalm 70:4).
- As a believer I understand that we all live with a hole on our inside that can only be filled by God. He put it there that we would seek Him. I want to answer a simple question this morning that we all need to answer and be ready to help others answer: Why Would I Want To Be A Christian? Let me start by mentioning some misconceptions about Christianity.

I. To Genuinely Experience Love

- A. When I answer the question, "Why would I want to be a Christian?" My first answer would be found here. Because of the genuine, unconditional love of God!
- B. Love has the power to shatter chains, prisons, and pain that life throws at us. Ie. Steven Curtis Chapman. Death of Maria Sue his daughter hit by SUV driven by teenage brother Will. He ran moments later and was tackled by his brother Caleb in someone lawn. As Steven drive by going to the hospital he shouted: "Will Franklyn, your father loves you!" Those words made all the difference for Will! You see, you heavenly Father's love is ...
- C. God's Love is unconditional. You do not have to meet any conditions to be loved by your heavenly Father. Just come to Him. John 3:16 "*For God so loved...*" or "*God loved so much*"
- D. God's Love is accepting - no one is rejected who comes to Him "*that whosoever*" Ie. Jesus accepted rugged fishermen, prostitutes, tax collectors...he will accept you.
- E. God genuinely enjoys us. "*For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.*" (Zephaniah 3:17, NLT) Ie. I loved putting the boys down at night and watching them sleep. Often I would go to their room and pray over them as I watched them sleep. I love watching my grandchildren play. I so enjoy the moment: "Dad can you fix this?" "PawPaw can you fix this?" then back to playing. It is the moment that floods the heart!!! God is like this and more.
- F. God's love brings security! Love brings so much security into a persons life. It produces boldness. It produces courage. It produces confidence. All because of the security produced by love.

1. In His love I am significant. I matter. My life counts. I am valuable.
 2. In His love I am forgiven. I am not guilty, not shamed, I am forgiven because of His unconditional love.
 3. In His love I am accepted. Men may reject me but God always accepts me! All because of His unconditional love.
 4. When love is absent we feel rejected, we are insecure because we do not know where we relationally stand, and we try to earn love and become something that we are not (facade) and that leaves us lonely.
- G. Love has an incredible power to heal, bring confidence, acceptance and right relationship.

II. To Be In Relationship with God

- A. When I answer the question, “Why would I want to be a Christian?” My second answer would be found here. To have a relationship with God. Not just know about Him, but to know Him and be known by Him. (I.e. Personal testimony) Let’s look at Jesus relationship with His Father. As an outsider looking in there are some powerful observations that we can make about Jesus and His Father.
1. At age 13. (Age 13, listen young people) “*“But why did you need to search?” he asked. “Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house?”*” (Luke 2:49, NLT) some translations read ‘be about my Father’s business.’ Jesus had an identity with the Father that was very personal. He wanted to do what His Father was doing. The Father was making a place for Him. Note: Jesus refers to God as “Father.”
 2. Jesus taught His disciples this revolutionary prayer...Lord’s prayer. “*Our Father.*” Abba, It denotes childlike intimacy and trust. It undoubtedly expresses the new relationship with God proclaimed and lived out by Jesus, not disrespect. Abba was probable the word actually used by Jesus as it is picked up later in the NT by other writers. (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) Jesus uses this term to show the relationship of a redeemed man to God. It is innocent, fresh and enjoyable.
 - a) [**In Christianity.** Jesus probably used *abbá* for God not only in Mk. 14:36 but also whenever the Gk. *patér* occurs. It denotes childlike intimacy and trust, not disrespect. In Paul (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) it may be a liturgical reminiscence, possibly of the opening of the Lord’s Prayer. It undoubtedly expresses the new relationship with God proclaimed and lived out by Jesus and then experienced by believers in him.” (Little Kittle)]
 3. In the Garden of Gethsemane Mk 14:36 Jesus cries out to God “Abba!” In His darkest hour of mental anguish He is pleading from His position as a dearly loved son. On the cross...His last words, “*Abba, into your hand I commit my spirit.*” Notice the Father was with Him all the way through life.
- B. Through Christ I come to the Father. It is the only way to become a Christian. “*Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”* (John 14:6, NLT) If you want this relationship with the Father you must go through Christ. Christianity would make no sense without Jesus at the core/center of our faith.
- C. Another joyful aspect of this relationship with God is faithfulness...Never forsaken “*.... And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” (Matthew 28:20, NLT) It gives me a sense of security knowing that He is always with me.

- D. In accusation/judgment Christ is my Advocate. *“My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous.”* (1 John 2:1, NLT)
1. Charles Wesley, Arise my soul arise: Before the throne my surety stands, My name is written on His hands.
 2. Jesus is my defense before the judgment seat of God. He declares me innocent!!!
- E. Because of this relationship with God, because of the security I have with Him and because of Jesus as my defense I am guaranteed to spend Eternity with God! *“You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.”* (Psalm 16:11, NLT)

III. To Experience True Meaning and Purpose

- A. To have purpose is to have direction and meaning. If I have a purpose I am going somewhere. I have meaning. To have no purpose or meaning is to be lost. Ie. If I did the dream of Jeanie thing, and wiggled my nose and the next moment you are in a boat in the middle of the ocean drifting, what would you feel? Afraid, lost, why am I here? And if I wiggled my nose again and you suddenly had a compass, a motor and a note saying go west until you reach land. What would have changed? You now have direction and a purpose: get to land. To have purpose is to have direction and meaning. So many people live without this. Listen to these bleak words from famous writers, philosophers and scientists.
1. Joseph Heller, the author of “Catch-22” wrote, "I have no answers to the meaning of life and I no longer want to search for any."
 2. Isaac Asimov wrote back, "As far as I can see there is no purpose to life."
 3. Famous American Psychiatrist Albert Ellis said, "As far as I can tell, life has no special or intrinsic meaning or purpose."
 4. American Philosopher Thomas Nagle, "I'm afraid the meaning of life still eludes me."
 5. Nietzsche said: “Life is an unprofitable episode that disturbs an otherwise blessed state of non-existence”
 6. Karl Jung, the Austrian psychiatrist, wrote, "I don't know what the meaning or the purpose of life is but it looks like as if there were something meant by it."
 7. Now, as you can tell from their comments, these people had no idea if life had any purpose or value or “direction”. And people who have no direction in life are literally “lost.” Have no significance and are drifting. Biding their time until death.
 8. My third answer to our question: “Why would I want to be a Christian?” is this: Knowing God gives me purpose and meaning in life. I am going somewhere. I have a destination and because of that destination my life has meaning.
- B. We are His workmanship. *“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”* (Ephesians 2:10, NLT) God made me. God does not make junk. Because there is a Creator, his creation has purpose. There is a reason I am made in His image. I am His masterpiece! I have been created with purpose: *“to do the good things He planned for me long ago!”*
- C. I am made in His image. Therefore, I am called to grow in the Fruit of the Spirit. *“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”* (Galatians 5:22, NLT) 1 Cor 13 Love. The world does not necessarily seek after these things but it totally loves experiencing them.

- D. To be fruitful in life is to achieve my God given purpose. Produce fruit. *“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”* (John 15:5, NLT) When you abide in God you can't help but be fruitful!
- E. I love this quote from Maximus Decimus Meridus in the movie Gladiator. “What we do in this life echoes in eternity!”
1. I love this quote because it resonates with a profound a Biblical point: Life is short, eternity is long, but our lives matter in eternity. I want to be a part of something that makes a difference for eternity, I mean who doesn't?
 2. We are rewarded for what we do!

Conclusion:

- Nejdra Nance always lived with the feeling that she never quite belonged. It cause her to search until she found her true home. Will Chapman was so crushed by guilt that all he wanted to do was run. Until he heard his father say, “Will Franklyn, your father loves you!” How about you?
- Do you have that empty spot in your soul that longs to be filled today? Are you drifting on the ocean of life with no purpose or meaning? Are you so crushed by sin and shame that all you want to do is run?
- Why would I want to be a Christian? To experience unconditional love, have a relationship with a faithful father, and to live life with purpose.
- *"You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart"* (Jeremiah 29:13).
- Everyone has a God sized hole in side of you that longs to be filled. Why would I want to be a Christian? To have a relationship with God. To experience a love that is life changing. To bring meaning into my life.