

Opening: Introduction with U.S. Surgeon General’s Quote

[Source: <https://people.com/surgeon-general-vivek-murthy-americans-closing-letter-rethink-how-we-are-living-our-lives-exclusive-8770191>, accessed 1-7-2025]

- Highlight Vivek H. Murthy's call to rethink our lives by focusing on relationships, service, and purpose.

- Share his father's experience in a close-knit Indian village, emphasizing how strong community bonds create fulfillment.

[from 1-12-2025 Sunday Blast] **U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek H. Murthy, in his leaving his post, urged Americans to rethink their lives by focusing on relationships, service, and purpose. He wrote of his father's experience in a close-knit Indian village, where community bonds provided fulfillment despite widespread scarcity.**

“But in the village, people took care of each other. They shared food, looked out for each other’s kids, and helped out in a crisis — like when my father’s mother died when he was just 10 and neighbors stepped in like surrogate parents. People also knew each other, not just their names, but their stories and families, and they chose to spend time with each other over meals, games, and celebrations for the many festivals that dotted the calendar.”

- Contrast this with modern struggles of materialism, social media pressures, and eroded connections.

[from 1-12-2025 Sunday Blast] **He further claimed that the erosion of these bonds is a root cause of widespread pain and unhappiness in the U.S., which is worsened by economic hardship, negative news and social media, and social pressures to strive for fame, wealth, and power.**

Nice secular words – is there Biblical basis for this? Love, service, and purpose. (go to “transition”)

Transition to Biblical Foundations

Modern writings: **Some may question the use of contemporary writings in religious reflections, yet many modern insights echo Biblical truths.**

Karl Barth (maybe) “take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both.”

In his closing letter, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy calls Americans to rethink their lives by prioritizing relationships, service, and purpose—principles deeply rooted in scripture. His reflections on the strength of community, the value of humble service, and the need for a life grounded in meaning resonate with the teachings of John 15:12, Galatians 5:13, and Ephesians 2:10. This alignment highlights how God’s Word transcends time and culture, offering wisdom that speaks to every generation. Our task, then, is not to separate contemporary insights from our faith but to recognize how God’s eternal message continues to shape and guide our lives in the world

“Recommitment” (re-make, re-center)

today. By faithfully applying Biblical teachings to the challenges of our times, we become vessels of love, service, and purpose, bringing hope and renewal to the world around us.

- Introduce John 15:12, Galatians 5:13, and Ephesians 2:10 as scriptural support for relationships, service, and purpose.

His [Murthy’s] reflections on the strength of community, the value of humble service, and the need for a life grounded in meaning resonate with the teachings of John 15:12, Galatians 5:13, and Ephesians 2:10. **We heard these a few minutes ago and we’ll hear them again.**

- Connect Murthy’s wisdom with timeless Biblical principles.

This alignment highlights how God’s Word transcends time and culture, offering wisdom that speaks to every generation. Our task, then, is not to separate contemporary insights from our faith but to recognize how God’s eternal message continues to shape and guide our lives in the world today. By faithfully applying Biblical teachings to the challenges of our times, we become vessels of love, service, and purpose, bringing hope and renewal to the world around us.

Main Body

Relationships: John 15:12

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

- Emphasize Jesus’ command to love one another as He has loved us.
- Discuss practical applications: mending broken bonds, building inclusive communities, and reflecting Christ’s love.
- Share examples of how love heals divisions in families, friendships, and society.

Service: Galatians 5:13

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become enslaved to one another.”

Note this translation: “become enslaved”, another translation “serve one another humbly in love.”

- Explain the call to use our freedom for humble service.
- Highlight that true service stems from love and aligns with God’s will.
- Illustrate through examples of selfless acts that uplift others, such as volunteering or supporting those in need.

Purpose: Ephesians 2:10

“For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.”

- Explore the concept of being God’s handiwork, created for good works.

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- Encourage listeners to find and embrace their unique purpose in God’s plan.
- Share stories of individuals living out their faith through actions that bring hope and renewal.

Conclusion

Service and Humility

Throughout my preparation for this sermon, I found multiple times these two words appearing closely together: Service and Humility. I suppose there were “pairs” for love and purpose, but the pair of service and humility stuck in my mind.

Biblical Foundations

[good source: https://biblehub.com/topical/t/the_role_of_jesus_as_servant.htm]

“The role of Jesus as a servant is a central theme in Christian theology, reflecting His humility, obedience, and sacrificial love. This concept is deeply rooted in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament and is vividly portrayed in the New Testament, where Jesus exemplifies servanthood through His life and ministry.

“[in the Old Testament] The idea of the Messiah as a servant is prominently featured in the Book of Isaiah, particularly in the "Servant Songs." Isaiah 42:1-4 introduces the Servant of the Lord, who is chosen and upheld by God to bring justice to the nations. Isaiah 53 further develops this theme, describing the suffering servant who bears the iniquities of many: "But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). These passages foreshadow the redemptive work of Jesus, who fulfills these prophecies through His life, death, and resurrection.

“In the New Testament, Jesus explicitly identifies Himself as a servant. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus states, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). This declaration encapsulates His mission and the essence of His servanthood.”

Call to Action

- Summarize how living Biblically involves embracing love, humility, and purpose in daily life.
- Encourage practical steps to strengthen relationships, serve others, and pursue good works.

Reflection and Encouragement

- Conclude with the two-paragraph reflection provided:
 - On relationships: Love others as Jesus loved us.

“Recommitment” (re-make, re-center)

- On service and purpose: Humbly serve in love and fulfill the unique mission God has prepared for us.

Closing Prayer

- Lead a prayer, incorporating the themes of relationships, service, and purpose, asking God for guidance and strength to live Biblically in the new year.

Heavenly Father,

We come before You with grateful hearts, thankful for the love You have shown us through Your Son, Jesus Christ. As we reflect on Your Word, we ask for the strength and wisdom to live as You have called us to live—in love, humility, and purpose.

Teach us to love one another as Christ loved us, breaking down barriers and building relationships rooted in compassion and grace. Help us to serve humbly, using our freedom to lift others and reflect Your goodness in all we do. And guide us as we walk in the purpose You have prepared for us, that our lives may bring light and hope to a world longing for renewal.

Lord, renew our hearts and re-center our lives on You. May we go forth as Your handiwork, equipped to do the good works You have planned, and may Your Spirit lead us in all things. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer.

Amen.