"I think, therefore I am," does not adequately express the real meaning of life; however it is a good starting point as "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17 KJV) and a good FINALS point--as in the last Part of this ONE COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS, we will consider things both to think and do.

"What's it all about Alfie," in the song expresses the deep inner longing for ultimate meaning in life. The book of Psalms expresses it as: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." (42:1 KJV) And Wayne Oates, the Christian psychologist, talks of the religious dimensions of man's becoming personality in terms of purpose, direction, integration, and meaning.

Many are the occasions we question the direction in our lives. At the sudden death of a loved one and during the grief and funeral period, much of the things we do and think lose some meaning. What is the purpose of it all?

We search the world for truth.
We cull the good, the true, the beautiful from graven tomb and written scroll, and all old flower beds of the soul;
And weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest to find that all the sages said is in the book our mothers read.
We turn to the book of Ephesians for fresh meaning to and purpose in life. It will not sound like what our mothers read, for we don't hear the book of Ephesians that often, and because the words of the New English Version (NEV) give new significance to what has been in the King James Version (KJV) all along but skipped over:

"He (God) has made known to us his hidden purpose--such was his will and pleasure determined beforehand in Christ--to be put into effect when the time was ripe: namely, that the universe, all in heaven and on earth, might be brought into a unity in Christ." (Ephesians 1:9,10 NEV)

Quickly dissect it to get the full impact: God's purpose for the whole universe was hidden until the time was ripe to put it into effect; it was the will and pleasure of God to determine it beforehand in Christ; and it is God's pleasure and will to bring the whole universe of heaven and earth into a unity in Christ.

Six times the word "purpose" is used in the book of Ephesians in the New English Version: (1) God's "hidden purpose" as given above in 1:9,10; (2) God's "purpose is everywhere at work" in 1:11; (3) God's purpose to reconcile in 2:16; (4) God's "hidden purpose was to be put into effect" in 3:8,9; (5) "his age-long purpose" in 3:11; and (6) Paul's "purpose to let you know all about us" in 6:21,22.
Surely, one would think, God's purpose for the universe must have something to do with Christians. The book of Ephesians provides some clarity on that also. While the word "Christian" is to be found only three times in the King James Version of the New Testament, it is found three times alone in Ephesians in the New English Version. In a day where the owner of HUSTLER magazine has claimed to be a "born again Christian," it behooves us to go back to the original Biblical meanings for God's purpose and for Christians: (1) You learned Christ as a Christian in Ephesians 4:20,21; (2) As Christians you are light, not darkness in Ephesians 5:7,8; and (3) Ephesians 6:4 talks about the correction and instruction of a "Christian upbringing".

Amazing! We have only made a brief devotional beginning in Ephesians where Paul prays "that your inward eyes may be illumined" (1:18 NEV), and already clustered around the words "purpose" and "Christian" we have been exposed to some of the great truths from all six chapters of Ephesians. We bow in humility at the Revelation of the wisdom of God. As God reminds us in the book of Isaiah (55:9 KJV): "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Revelation
included a "hidden purpose" and a "mystery", but as Paul writes in Ephesians: "It was by a revelation that his secret was made known to me." (3:3 NEV)

Paul was not the only one to whom this secret was disclosed. "In former generations this was not disclosed to the human race; but now it has been revealed by inspiration to his dedicated apostles and prophets, that through the Gospel the Gentiles are joint heirs with the Jews..." (Eph. 3:5,6 NEV) And Paul was certainly humble about this new-found wisdom: "To me, who am less than the least of all God's people, he has granted of his grace the privilege of proclaiming to the Gentiles the good news of the unfathomable riches of Christ, and of bringing to light how this hidden purpose was to be put into effect." (Eph. 3:8,9 NEV)

Paul was as open as he was humble and with a personal purpose linked to God's purpose:

"You will want to know about my affairs, and how I am; Tychicus will give you all the news. He is our dear brother and trustworthy helper in the Lord's work. I am sending him to you on purpose to let you know all about us, and to put fresh heart into you." (Eph. 6:21,22 NEV)

And Paul expressed the bottom line of the meaning of his life--the letting you know all about us--when he wrote: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21 KJV)