



40 DAYS OF PURPOSE

TAUGHT BY RICK WARREN

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDY GUIDE

You are about to embark on a life-changing experience in your small group. Studying God's Word together always impacts our lives in powerful ways. One of the unique features of this curriculum is that it uses God's five purposes for your life as the format for each session. These purposes, as found in *The Purpose Driven Life*, are Fellowship (Connect), Discipleship (Grow), Ministry (Serve), Evangelism (Share), and Worship. When you see the following symbols and elements in the study guide, you will know the particular purpose that section promotes.

These sessions are formatted to last ninety minutes. The format of each session is as follows:



Connect (Fellowship) — Intimate connection with God and his family is the foundation for spiritual growth. This section will help you get to know the members of your group. It will also give you the opportunity to check your progress from week to week.



Grow (Discipleship) — This section is made up of three components:

- 1) A weekly Bible memory verse that fits the theme of the session. While this may be a challenge for some people in your group, we encourage you to take this opportunity to grow deeper in your walk with God through this key spiritual habit.
- 2) A weekly video teaching session by Pastor Rick Warren. Follow along using the outline in this study guide.
- 3) Discussion questions designed to facilitate a deeper understanding of the Bible and to help you consider how the truths of Scripture can impact your life.



Serve (Ministry) — Nothing is more fulfilling than using your God-given gifts to serve the needs of others in God's family. This section will help your group discover how you can serve each other and your church together.



Share (Evangelism) — God wants to use your small group to reach your community for Christ. The Share section is designed to give you and your group practical suggestions and exercises for sharing the love of Christ with others.



Worship — In each small group session you will have the opportunity to surrender your hearts to God and express your worship to him. In this section you will be led in various forms of small group worship including prayer, Scripture reading, singing together, and sharing what God is doing in your lives. This portion of your session can be very meaningful for your group.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDY GUIDE

Additional Study: If your group has the time for a little more Bible study, we have provided two or three additional questions for discussion in each session.

Preparation for Next Time: This optional section is for individuals or groups who are willing to do more study during the week. This section generally includes cross-references, questions, and practical ideas relevant to the subject you will study in the coming week.

Daily Reading Plan: *The Purpose Driven Life* by Pastor Rick Warren parallels the weekly lessons in this study guide. The book is a powerful way to go deeper in your understanding and commitment to God's purposes for your life. If everyone follows the daily reading plan, it will greatly enhance your small group experience.

Host Tips: These brief instructions in gray type are helpful coaching hints for your group host. Here's your first tip:

HOST TIP: THE STUDY GUIDE MATERIAL IS MEANT TO BE YOUR SERVANT, NOT YOUR MASTER. SO PLEASE DON'T FEEL YOU HAVE TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION IN EVERY SECTION. THE POINT IS NOT TO RACE THROUGH THE SESSION; THE POINT IS TO TAKE TIME TO LET GOD WORK IN YOUR LIVES. NOR IS IT NECESSARY TO "GO AROUND THE CIRCLE" BEFORE YOU MOVE ON TO THE NEXT QUESTION. GIVE PEOPLE THE FREEDOM TO SPEAK, BUT DON'T INSIST THAT THEY DO. YOUR GROUP WILL ENJOY DEEPER, MORE OPEN SHARING AND DISCUSSION IF PEOPLE DON'T FEEL PRESSURED TO SPEAK UP. IF YOUR GROUP IS UNABLE TO WORK THROUGH ALL THE MATERIAL IN A SESSION, WE HAVE RECOMMENDED ONE QUESTION OR ACTIVITY WITH AN ASTERISK (*) IN EACH SECTION OF THE STUDY.

HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO CURRICULUM

Here is a brief explanation of the features on your small group DVD or VHS. These features include six *Helps for Hosts* and six *Video Teaching Sessions*. Here's how they work:

Helps for Hosts are special video messages just for group hosts. They provide brief video instructions that will help the host prepare for each week's small group session. The group host should watch these features before the group arrives for each study.

The *Video Teaching Sessions* provide your group with the teaching for each week of the study. Watch these features with your group. After watching the video teaching, continue in your study by working through the discussion questions and activities in the study guide.

Follow these simple steps for a successful small group session:

1. Hosts: Before your group arrives, watch the *Helps for Hosts* feature for that session. This brief video message will help you prepare for your small group study.
2. Group: Open your group meeting by using the Connect section in your study guide.
3. Group: Watch Pastor Rick Warren's video teaching and follow along with the outlines in the study guide.
4. Group: Complete the rest of the discussion materials for each session in the study guide.

It's just that simple. Have a great study together!

Note about Cover Illustration:

We would like to give special thanks to Tom Clark of Capistrano Beach, California, for permitting us to use his painting, "Tree of Life," as the cover art for this edition of *40 Days of Purpose*. The painting was inspired by the Apostle John's vision in the Book of Revelation:

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal,
flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.
On each side of the river stood the tree of life,
bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.
And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

Revelation 22:1–2 (NIV)



SESSION ONE:
WHAT ON EARTH AM
I HERE FOR?

SESSION ONE

HOST TIP: IF YOUR GROUP IS UNABLE TO WORK THROUGH THE ENTIRE CURRICULUM, WE HAVE RECOMMENDED ONE QUESTION OR ACTIVITY WITH AN ASTERISK (*) IN EACH SECTION OF THE STUDY.

If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born by his purpose and for his purpose.
Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (page 17)



CONNECT15 Minutes

1. If your group is new or you have any new members, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Briefly share how you came to be a part of this small group.
- *2. What is one thing you hope God will do in your life as a result of *40 Days of Purpose*?



GROW35–40 Minutes

Memory Verse

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)



Watch the video lesson now and follow along in your outline.

WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?

I. The Consequences of Not Knowing Your Purpose

1. Without knowing your purpose, life will seem _____ .

⁵The sun still rises and it still goes down . . . ⁶the wind blows . . . round and round and back again. ⁷Every river flows into the sea . . . [then] the water returns to where the rivers began, and starts all over again. ⁸Everything leads to weariness . . .
(Ecclesiastes 1:5–8 TEV)

2. Without knowing your purpose, life will seem _____ .

⁸No matter how much we see, we're never satisfied; no matter how much we hear, we are not content. ^{9a}History merely repeats itself. Nothing is truly new . . .
(Ecclesiastes 1:8b–9a LB)

3. Without knowing your purpose, life will seem _____ .

You can't straighten out what is crooked; you can't count things that aren't there.
(Ecclesiastes 1:15 TEV)

II. The Benefits of Knowing Your Purpose

¹²I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. ¹³No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.
(Philippians 3:12b–14 NLT)

1. Knowing the purpose of your life will give your life _____ .

. . . I am focusing all my energies on this one thing . . . (Philippians 3:13 NLT)

SESSION ONE

2. Knowing the purpose of your life will _____ your life.

. . . forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead.
(Philippians 3:13 NLT)

3. Knowing the purpose of your life will increase your _____ in life.

I strain to reach the end of the race . . . (Philippians 3:14 NLT)

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11 LB)

4. Knowing the purpose of your life will prepare you for _____ .

. . . receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.
(Philippians 3:14 NLT)

He has also set eternity in the hearts of men . . . (Ecclesiastes 3:11b NIV)

Discussion Questions

- *1. Read this week’s memory verse again: *For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do* (Ephesians 2:10). What does this verse tell you about God’s purpose for your life? Do you believe it’s true? If so, how should it affect the way you live?

WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?

2. Ecclesiastes 1 points out three consequences of not knowing your purpose:

- Life will seem tiresome
- Life will seem unfulfilling
- Life will seem uncontrollable

With which of these three do you most identify? Why?

3. The Apostle Paul had a clear understanding of God's purpose for his life. Even though Paul was also a tentmaker, he was able to say, "I am focusing all my energies on this one thing." If you could discover God's purpose for your life, how would it help to focus or simplify your life?

4. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says God "has set eternity in the hearts of men." What do you think that verse means? What are some practical ways we can live life here on earth in preparation for life in eternity?

HOST TIP: DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF YOUR GROUP, TIME AVAILABILITY, OR STAGE OF MATURITY, ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ARE PROVIDED AT THE END OF THIS LESSON FOR YOUR GROUP TO STUDY. YOU MAY WANT TO USE THESE QUESTIONS AS SUGGESTED HOMEWORK EACH WEEK OR TURN THERE RIGHT NOW FOR EXTENDED DISCUSSION.

SESSION ONE



Serve15 Minutes

The purpose driven life cannot be lived alone. There is no such thing as a lone ranger Christian. This section of the curriculum is designed to help you live out your faith by serving your group and church.

- *1. Open to the *Group Guidelines and Agreement* in the *Small Group Resources* section of this study guide, page 64. Take a few minutes to review these guidelines together. They will help everyone know what to expect and how to contribute to a meaningful small group time.
2. A central component of *40 Days of Purpose* is the daily reading of *The Purpose Driven Life*. Turn to the *Daily Reading Plan* on page 76, and decide as a group the date you will start reading Day 1 of the book. Then take a moment to pair up with someone in your group to be your reading partner. A little encouragement and friendly accountability can help you stay on your reading schedule. We recommend that men partner with men and women with women. Check in with each other throughout the week or at your group meetings to share what you are learning, and to encourage each other in your progress through the book.



Share10 Minutes

- *1. God uses other people in specific ways in each of our lives. In whose life does God want to use you? Now is a great time to consider whom you might invite to your next meeting. Turn to the *Circles of Life* diagram on page 66 of this study guide. Take a moment and ask God to bring to your mind the names of people for each category in the diagram.

WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?

2. Commit to your small group that you will invite at least one person from your *Circles of Life* diagram to your next group meeting. Prepare for growth! Surveys have found that at least half of those invited to a small group accept the invitation.



Worship20 Minutes

HOST TIP: To MAXIMIZE PRAYER TIME AND ALLOW GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL SHARING, BREAK INTO SUBGROUPS OF THREE OR FOUR PEOPLE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IF YOUR GROUP HAS MORE THAN EIGHT MEMBERS.

1. Record your group's prayer requests on the *Small Group Prayer and Praise Report* on page 67 of your study guide. Keeping track of group prayer requests and answers to prayer would be a great job for someone in your group. Any volunteers?
- *2. Pray for each other's prayer requests. Remember to pray for the people you want to invite to your next group meeting. If you have never prayed out loud in a group, you might simply pray a single sentence prayer, like, "Thank you, God, for creating me for a purpose." That's all you need to say. It doesn't have to be anything fancy or theologically profound, but your prayer will be meaningful to you and to the rest of your group.

SESSION ONE

Before You Leave

1. Turn to the *Small Group Calendar* in the *Small Group Resources* section of your study guide, page 69. Healthy groups share responsibilities and group ownership. Fill out the calendar together, at least for next week, noting where you will meet each week, who will facilitate your meeting, and who will provide a meal or snack. Note special events, socials, or days off as well. Your group host will be very appreciative and everyone will have a lot more fun together. This would be a great role for someone to coordinate for the group.
2. Also, start collecting basic contact information like phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The *Group Roster* on the inside front cover of your study guide is a good place to keep this information. Pass the study guides in a circle to ensure everyone gets the information first hand.

Additional Study

This week we looked at the lives of two prominent people: King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived; and the Apostle Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament. Solomon learned firsthand that all we experience in life is meaningless when we live without an eternal perspective. On the other hand, Paul was clearly focused on eternity from the moment of his calling. Let's consider some of the final words of these two great men of the Bible.

1. Read Ecclesiastes 9:1–6 and 12:13–14. What conclusion did Solomon reach at the end of his life?

WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?

2. Read 2 Timothy 4:1–5. What does Paul tell us about the lessons he learned in life?

- *3. According to 2 Timothy 4:6–8, what was Paul’s conclusion about his life as he looked back at his past and then forward to his future?

4. What do you learn from Solomon and Paul that could help you in your life?

Preparation for Next Time

- *1. In order to get the most from this study, we strongly recommend that you follow the *Daily Reading Plan* on page 76 and read a chapter a day from *The Purpose Driven Life* (Days 1–7). You may want to write your responses, reflections, or requests to God in a journal.
2. Be sure to call one of the friends you prayed for in the group this week and invite him or her to join your small group. Offer to pick him or her up and be sure to get each person a study guide before the meeting.
3. Work on this week’s memory verse and be prepared to share it with someone at the next meeting. The memory verses are also included on page 75 in the *Small Group Resources* section. A simple way to memorize Scripture is to hand-write the verse five to eight times on a piece of paper. Memorizing Scripture will help build your faith and grow your confidence in God.

NOTES