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## Contents

Introduction by Rick Warren
Understanding Your Study Guide
How to Use This Video Curriculum
Small Group Sessions
Session One: What Matters Most
Session Two: Reaching Out Together
Session Three: Belonging Together
Session Four: Growing Together
Session Five: Serving Together
Session Six: Worshiping Together
SMALL GROUP RESOURCES
Helps for Hosts
Frequently Asked Questions
Group Guidelines
Circles of Life
Small Group Prayer and Praise Report
Small Group Calendar
Answer Key
My Small Group
Additional Resources91

## Introduction

Dear Friends,

If you have read *The Purpose Driven* \*\* *Life*, you have discovered that God placed each of us on earth for five purposes: to get to know and love him (worship), to learn to love each other (fellowship), to grow in becoming like Jesus (discipleship), to practice using our talents in serving God (ministry), and to share the good news with others (evangelism). Today, millions of people around the world have begun to enjoy living a purpose driven life.

But this life of purpose that God intends for you is not meant to be lived alone. In fact, it is impossible to fulfill God's five purposes for your life by yourself. We need each other! From the beginning, God's plan has been that you will fulfill his purposes in community with other people—people in your church family, in your small group, and in the world around you. Why did God plan it this way? Because we're better together!

The goal of 40 Days of Community is to water the seeds of purpose that may have been planted in your life through reading The Purpose Driven Life, and help you take the next step to spiritual maturity and a meaningful life on earth. 40 Days of Community will deepen your understanding of how God uses other people—specifically others in your church family—for your good and your growth. It will also show you how God can use you to bless others.

Our focus for the next forty days will be on fulfilling God's five purposes together. We'll do this in two ways: first, by deepening the community of love within our church family, and second, by reaching out in love to the community around our church family. Both are essential for a healthy, balanced, purpose driven life.

Your participation in this small group will be the most essential part of 40 Days of Community. Real community is caught, not taught. In your group, you'll not just learn how to build community—hopefully, you'll experience it.

The Purpose Driven Life focused on the question: "What on earth am I here for?" In 40 Days of Community, we're looking at a different question: "What on earth are we here for?" During the next six weeks, we'll examine the five reasons we need each other to fulfill God's purposes for our lives. Here's an overview of the reasons:

We fellowship better together! The Bible says you were formed for fellowship, and obviously you can't fellowship by yourself! It takes at least two people. At the same time, you can't fellowship with a crowd either. True fellowship happens in a small group of people. That's why Jesus had a small group of twelve disciples! He modeled fellowship.

Community doesn't happen automatically. And joining a church doesn't guarantee fellowship! You can attend church services your entire life and still feel lonely and disconnected. The Bible says, "You must learn to be considerate of one another, cultivating a life in common" (1 Corinthians 1:10 MSG). Notice that fellowship is something we must learn how to do. It must be intentionally cultivated.

What does it mean to cultivate a life in common? In the Bible, the Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*. It means to be as committed to each other as we are to Jesus Christ. Real fellowship takes us beyond simply socializing or studying together and into deeper levels of serving together and, at times, even suffering together. That kind of fellowship is the antidote to the pervasive loneliness that haunts so many people.

We grow better together! Just as your hand can't grow if it gets severed from your body, you cannot grow spiritually if you are detached from fellowship with a local body of believers. The Bible says that together we are the body of Christ. And as such, every member of the body is important and necessary for the body to function as it was designed to do.

During 40 Days of Community we'll practice some of the best ways to help each other grow spiritually, such as accepting each other (Romans 15:7), affirming each other (1 Thessalonians 5:11), and advising each other (Colossians 3:16). Just as a baby needs a family in order to grow, you need a spiritual family in order to become all God intends for you to become.

Some people think that the only way to be holy or righteous is to live in isolation—become a hermit in a cave so you won't be stained by humanity. But Jesus, the most holy person who ever lived, lived among us—in the middle of all our problems. He comforted the poor, hung out with outcasts, touched lepers, and associated with people with all kinds of hang-ups and bad habits. Religious leaders called him "the friend of sinners," a derogatory term, but Jesus considered it evidence of his love.

It's only in community that we learn life's most important lesson learning how to love. Without relationships, we'll never be able to develop patience, kindness, unselfishness, forgiveness, and all the other Christlike qualities that God wants us to possess. We serve better together! Paul urged the believers in the church at Philippi, "Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose" (Philippians 2:2 NLT). There are many benefits to serving God together instead of by yourself: we compensate for each other's weaknesses, we're more efficient, we multiply our effectiveness, we can defeat bigger problems, and we can support each other when we're tired or discouraged.

Did you know that your talents are not for your benefit? God gave them to you for the benefit of others. And he gave others talents for your benefit. That way, none of us can arrogantly claim that we are completely self-sufficient. God wants us to depend on each other to accomplish his purposes.

In fact, our talents are best used when we combine them with the talents of others. As the Bible says, "Two people can accomplish more than twice as much as one; they get a better return for their labor" (Ecclesiastes 4:9 NLT). Serving God together is the way he intended, and during 40 Days of Community, many of us will experience the joy of serving together for the very first time.

We worship better together! Worshiping together increases our joy, enlarges our perspective, helps others to believe, and guarantees God's presence in our midst. Jesus said, "Whenever two or three of you come together in my name, I am there with you" (Matthew 18:20 CEV). While it is true that God is always with us, there is a unique and powerful sense of his presence that can only be enjoyed and experienced in community with other believers.

When we worship with other believers it helps us see beyond ourselves and our own problems. C. S. Lewis, the brilliant Oxford author, was asked about the importance of worshiping together. He told about his first experience in attending worship services: "I very much disliked their hymns, which I considered to be fifth-rate poems set to sixth-rate music. But as I went on, I saw the great merit of it all ... and gradually my conceit began peeling off. I realized that the sixth-rate hymns were, nevertheless, being sung with devotion and benefit by an old saint in elastic-side boots in the opposite pew, and I realized that I wasn't fit to clean those boots. Worshiping together gets us out of our solitary conceit."

We reach out better together! The Bible says, "Above all else, live in a way that brings honor to the good news about Christ.... Then I will know that you are working together and struggling side by side to get others to believe the good news" (Philippians 1:27 CEV). God expects us to partner in sharing the good news with others.

One practical way you can do this is by inviting people from your community to be a part of this small group study with you! Many people who might be reluctant or hesitant to visit a church service would gladly accept an invitation to an informal group study in a home or office. Don't miss this perfect opportunity to reach out to neighbors, friends, and coworkers.

Another way your small group can reach out together is through a group outreach project. There are plenty of opportunities right in your own community: the poor who need to be fed, shut-ins who need a visit, the elderly who could use some help around the house with repairs or yard work, kids with a single parent who need mentors, and people all around you who need to know that God loves them and has a purpose for their lives. That's why he sent Jesus to die for them.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:35 – 40 (NIV) that one day we'll each stand before God and one of the things we'll be evaluated on is how we treated other people: "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." We'll say, "When did we do that to you, Lord?" And God will reply, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these . . . you did for me."

It's time for us to put our love into action. Imagine what could happen if every small group in your church reached out together, showing love in practical ways to those in your community. Don't you think that would make a difference in your area?

Now imagine what could happen if every small group in all the purpose driven churches across the country did it with you! Millions of lives would be touched, millions of people would begin a relationship with Christ, millions of practical needs would be met, and the church would become known more for the love it shows than for what it is against. God would be pleased, and we could see a spiritual awakening that is desperately needed in our culture.

God is moving in amazing ways in thousands of churches these days. I invite you to be a part of making history! It is an invitation to become a part of a great movement of purpose driven people and churches who are living for the global glory of God. Someone once pointed out that snowflakes are frail, but when enough of them stick together they can stop traffic. In the same way, you and I may feel like we can't make much of a difference as individuals. But together—with others in your small group, and with your church family, and with other congregations that are also committed to God's purposes—we can make a difference in our culture and our world. That is the awesome power of community!

# 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, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission, and Worship. When you see the following symbols and elements in the study guide, you will know the particular purpose that section promotes. The format of each session is as follows:



Connect Together: 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 Together: This section is made up of three components:

- A weekly Bible memory verse that fits the theme of the session.
- A weekly video teaching session by Pastor Rick Warren. Follow along using the outline in this study guide.
- 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 Together: 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 Together:** God wants to use your small group to reach your community for Christ. The Share Together section is designed to give you and your group practical suggestions and exercises for sharing the love of Christ with others.

#### 14 · 40 DAYS OF COMMUNITY STUDY GUIDE



Worship Together: 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.

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

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.

These features include six Helps for Hosts, one Group Lifter, 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 instruction from Pastor Rick Warren that will help you, 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 **Group Lifter** is an introductory message to your whole group from Pastor Rick Warren. Be sure to show this Group Lifter to your group before you watch the video teaching for session one.

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:

- Hosts: Before your group arrives, watch the Helps for Hosts feature by Pastor Rick Warren. This brief video message will help you prepare for your small group session.
- Group: Open your group meeting by using the Connect Together section in your study guide.
- Group: Watch Pastor Rick's video teaching and follow along in the outlines in the study guide.
- 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!



**Host Tip:** If your group is unable to work through the entire session, we have recommended one question or activity with an asterisk (\*) in each section of the study.

- \*1. Give everyone a chance to introduce themselves and share how they came to be a part of this group.
- 2. Open to the Purpose Driven Group Guidelines in the Small Group Resources section of your study guide, page 79. Take a few minutes to review these group guidelines before you begin this 40 Days of Community study. These guidelines will help everyone know what to expect from the group and how to contribute to a meaningful small group experience.
- 3. Love is defined in many ways by our culture. How would you define love?



#### MEMORY VERSE

"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

John 13:35 NLT



Watch the session one video now and fill in the blanks in the outline on pages 19-21. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.

#### What Matters Most

If you are a follower of Christ Jesus . . . all that matters is your faith that makes you love others.

Galatians 5:6 CEV

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup>It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup>Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

<sup>8</sup>Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup>For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup>but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. <sup>12</sup>Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

<sup>13</sup>And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.
1 Corinthians 13:1–13 NIV

#### FIVE RADICAL STATEMENTS ABOUT LOVE

If I don't live a life of love:	
1. Nothing I	will matter.
others, I would only be making	in heaven or on earth, but didn't love meaningless noise like a loud gong or
a clanging cymbal.	1 Corinthians 13:1 NLT

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#### 20 · 40 Days of Community Study Guide

2.	Nothing I	will matter.	
	I may have the gift of prophecy. I may understand all the secret things of God and have all knowledge But if I do not have love, then I		
	am nothing.	1 Corinthians 13:2 NCV	
3.	Nothing I	will matter.	
	and make it move, I would st	so that I could speak to a mountain ill be worth nothing at all without	
	love.	1 Corinthians 13:2b LB	
4.	Nothing I	will matter.	
	If I gave everything I have to the but if I didn't love others, I wou	poor and even sacrificed my body ald be of no value whatsoever. 1 Corinthians 13:3 NLT	
5.	Nothing I	will matter.	
	No matter what I say, what I without love.	believe, or what I do, I'm bankrupt	
	without love.	1 Corinthians 13:3b MSG	
V	HAT IS LOVE?		
•	Love is a	-	
	"A new command I give you: Lo so you must love one another."	ove one another. As I have loved you, John 13:34 NIV	

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#### What Matters Most · 21

Go after a life of love as if you	r life depended on it—because it does. 1 Corinthians 14:1 MSG
Love is a	
Let us stop just saying we love p	people; let us really love them and show
it by our actions.	1 John 3:18 LB
Love is a	
God is love. If we keep on loving with God and he will stay one	ng others, we will stay one in our hearts with us.
-	1 John 4:16b CEV

### Discussion Questions

\*1. First Corinthians 13:1-3 makes five radical statements about love. They are the first five fill-ins of your outline. Which statement strikes you the most? Why?

2. First Corinthians 14:1 (MSG) says, "Go after a life of love as if your life depended on it—because it does." On a practical, day-to-day level, what does it mean to "go after a life of love"? What are some steps you can take to live this way?



\*1. One way to "go after" a life of love is to show appreciation to others. Is there a worker in your church who needs to be shown appreciation? As a group, choose either a church staff member or volunteer whom you could affirm this week. You might select an usher, a janitor, a teacher, a secretary, or a youth worker—someone who is involved in serving your congregation. Discuss ways your group can show love and appreciation to that person this week, such as a gift certificate to their favorite store or restaurant, a thank-you card signed by all the members of your group, tickets to a ball game, etc. Recruit one or two volunteers from your group to handle the details. Then, as a group, make plans to present your appreciation gift to the person you chose.



- \*1a. Use the Circles of Life diagram on page 81 to help you think of a neighbor, family member, friend, or coworker who would benefit from joining your small group.
  - 1b. Choose a person on your Circles of Life diagram to whom you can show the love of Christ this week—someone you have been meaning to call or visit, or someone you need to invite to church. Commit to doing something for that person this week. Tell your small group who the person is and what you will do: send an email, make a call, write a letter, buy a little gift, take him out for coffee, or invite her to join your small group next week.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

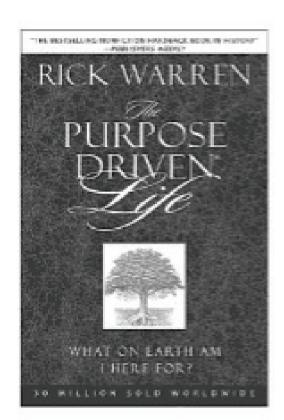


# **The Purpose Driven Life**What on Earth Am I Here For?



You are not an accident. Even before the universe was created, God had you in mind, and he planned you for his purposes. These purposes extend far beyond the few years you will spend on earth. You were made to last forever!

This award-winning, internationally acclaimed book, read by more than 30 million people around the globe has changed the lives of countless people as they find a true relationship with their creator. By helping people discover that to find meaning



and purpose, the only place to start is with God.

This book will help you understand why you are alive and God's amazing plan for you – both here and now, and for eternity. And knowing that purpose for your life will help reduce your stress, focus your energy, simplify your decisions, give meaning to your life, and, most importantly, prepare you for eternity.

This is a book of hope and challenge that you will read and re-read, offering more than 1,200 scriptural quotes and references, and inspiration to engage in God's plan for your life.

Available in hard and soft covers, audio CD, and leather-bound editions.

www.SaddlebackResources.com

# **The Purpose Driven Life**Six-session DVD-led Study



Throughout this six-session study, taught by Pastor Rick Warren, you will discover the answer to life's most fundamental questions, "What on Earth Am I Here For?"

This study, alongside the Purpose Driven Life book as part of the 40 Days of Purpose campaign, has been used by millions of people and thousands of churches worldwide since its release less than a decade ago. It will give you and your group the opportunity to discuss the implications and applications of living the life God created you to live.



Whether experiencing this spiritual adventure as a small group or on your own, this study will change your life and the way you view God's plan for it here on earth and afterwards.

www.SaddlebackResources.com

# **40 Days of Love**Spiritual Growth Campaign

Uncover the core of Jesus' ministry in how we show love to the people God has placed in our lives. How can we communicate more like Jesus? How do we love our creator, our neighbors, and ourselves? Learn why love is patient,



kind, forgiving, unselfish and always speaks the truth during this sixweek journey into the heart of the matter.

#### The 40 Days of Love Campaign features:

- Six studies by Pastor Rick Warren based on 1 Corinthians 13 (DVD video presentations and accompanying small group study guides).
- The Relationship Principles of Jesus, the book by Pastor Tom Holladay, which addresses six relationship principles broken down into 40 daily readings.
- Sermon transcripts, outlines and audio files for each of the six weeks of the campaign, plus promotional materials, and curriculum for Children and Youth.
- Cof all the commands in the Bible, two are the most important:

  Love God with all of your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. Above everything else we need to make love our number one
  priority, our primary objective, our life purpose. I can't tell you how
  excited I am about what will happen in your life, your family, and
  your friendships in this 40-day campaign.