

WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE?

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU HERE FOR?

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **CONFIDENTIALITY IS IMPORTANT.** Confidentiality is the key to building trust in relationships. Here are a few mottos to remember to be confidential: “What is said in small group, stays in small group.” *Nothing, nobody, never...Share nothing, to nobody, never*” outside of the group.

The First Purpose Of My Life

ICEBREAKER

What is one word would you use to describe yourself to a stranger?

INTRODUCTION

To understand your life purpose and calling, you have to begin with God, because God created you. You can't tell yourself what God's purposes are. Only your Creator can tell you. His calling on your life actually begins in the nature of God. And God's nature can be summed up in one word: **LOVE**. In this lesson, we will learn how understanding it will help you fulfill God's calling, His purposes for your life.

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“*God is love.*” It’s not a slogan or an ad campaign. It’s actually the very words of Scripture (*1 John 4:8*). Everything about Him can be summed up in that one word. And everything about what you mean to Him can be supplied by that one word. He loves you! This reveals God's first purpose for your life...

THE FIRST PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE IS TO RECEIVE GOD'S LOVE AND LOVE HIM BACK.

God created the entire universe. He created this planet, and He created the human race. Then He created you. Why? Because He DEEPLY LOVES YOU! The reason you are alive is because God wanted to love you!

Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure.
Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)

God loves you on your bad days just as much as He loves you on your good days. He loves you when you can feel His love, and He loves you when you can't feel His love. He loves you regardless of whether or not you feel you deserve His love.

There is nothing you can do that will make God stop loving you. You could try, but you simply can't do it—because His love for you is SO MASSIVE! It's based upon His character and not on anything you say, see or feel.

Yes, it is important to serve, obey, and trust Him, but God's greatest purpose for your life is... ***to receive His love and love Him back!***

How does it make you feel that God's first purpose for your life is to receive His love and love Him back? What obstacles in life keep you from feeling fully loved by God?

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We are each called to enjoy a daily, loving relationship with God. The relationship that God created you for is to be His son or His daughter. Not an acquaintance or a neighbor. He's so excited for us to get to know Him better.

He wants to be the primary relationship in your life. That is how we experience His love for us. If you want to experience God's love, you must be connected to Him to truly experience it.

When we understand just how much God loves us, we begin to understand His purpose for our lives. Take a look at this verse:

May you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. Ephesians 3:18 (NLT)

What does this tell us about God's love?

1. It's WIDE enough to be everywhere.

God's love for you is wide. It's everywhere you go. He is always with you and will never, ever leave you. Why? Because He loves you so much.

2. It's LONG enough to last forever.

You can't make God stop loving you. God will never love you any more than He does this second. God will never love you any less than He does this second. Because God's love is not based on who you are or what you do. It's based on who He is. And God is love.

3. It's DEEP enough to handle anything.

When your life gets tough, and you don't understand what's going on, as long as you stay in relationship with God, His love will help you get through anything.

4. It's HIGH enough to overlook my sins.

God doesn't excuse sin. Instead, He deals with my sin. He knows the terrible power sin can have over me. So, in love, He forgives my sins and gives me His loving power to overcome the temptation to sin.

Which of these four facets of God's love – Wide, Long, Deep, and High – bring you the most comfort? Which one do you most need to work on receiving?

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Here are five ways that your life can be radically changed when you start to grasp God's love for you and this first purpose for your life:

1. I feel *ACCEPTED RATHER THAN ASHAMED*.

Romans 5:1 (GNT) says, "*Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" There is nothing to be ashamed of in our past since we are fully accepted by Him.

2. I am *BOLD IN BRINGING MY NEEDS TO GOD*.

Hebrews 4 says that we can boldly approach God's throne since we are now His children. There is no longer fear. Instead, there is only love.

3. I have *PEACE IN PAIN I DON'T UNDERSTAND*.

Most of the pain in our lives is caused by others and ourselves, not God. We don't have to understand the reason behind everything that happens to us. But regardless of the source of our pain, all we need to understand is that God promises to give us His love through the pain we feel.

4. I gain *THE COURAGE TO TAKE RISKS*.

With the backing of God's unconditional love, we can try just about anything and not be afraid of failure. Because no matter how far you fall short, God's immense love for you will never change.

5. I *WORSHIP INSTEAD OF WORRY*.

God invites us over and over again in Scripture to cast our cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7). As a loving Father, He doesn't want us to worry about a thing.

Review the 5 ways God's love for you can help you. Which one speaks to you the most today?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, take a look at your life. Are you living out God's first and greatest purpose for your life...*TO RECEIVE GOD'S LOVE AND LOVE HIM BACK!*

Do you have the full knowledge that God loves you? Or is there some obstacle keeping you from this? If so,

- If you haven't begun a relationship with Jesus, invite Him into your heart today by praying the prayer below.
- Identify the reason you don't feel fully loved.
- Commit this week to be in relationship with God daily, throughout your day.
- Receive His unconditional love for your life.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Spending time reading God's word helps us become better people especially with those who are closest to us. Take some time to do SOAP using the scriptures from this week's list on the next page.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

God, I love You because You first loved me. You have shown me what true love looks like. You have provided for my every need. You care for my every pain. And You walk with me in every moment. Help me to receive Your unconditional love and to show Your unconditional love to others as I demonstrate who You are by how I live. Please help me to live in relationship with You everyday so I can receive Your love and love You back! Come into my heart Jesus. Be my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.



Find Time to READ God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

If we say we are His, we must follow the example of Christ.

--1 John 2:6 (CEV)

Day 2:

For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in His steps.

--1 Peter 2:21 (ESV)

Day 3:

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

--Ephesians 5:1-2 (NLT)

Day 4:

Let us have confidence, then, and approach God's throne, where there is grace. There we will receive mercy and find grace to help us just when we need it.

--Hebrews 4:16 (GNT)

Day 5:

Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.

--Romans 6:13 (NLT)