

Small Group Guide

Does Life Have a Purpose?

Important Questions of Faith (Part 4)

October 11, 2026

Introduction

This guide is designed to help your group go deeper into the themes explored in the sermon. The central question -- does life have a purpose? -- is one every person wrestles with at some point. Use the questions and reflections below to encourage honest conversation and meaningful engagement with Scripture and one another.

Key Takeaways

- Purpose is possible without God, but it tends to become self-centered, focused on personal happiness, comfort, or material gain, and can leave a person feeling empty.
 - A God-centered life shifts the question from "what do I want to do with my life?" to "who is God calling me to be?"
 - Worship is not limited to a Sunday morning service -- it extends into every area of daily life, including work, family, and community.
 - God's purpose is not always revealed all at once. Trusting Him through uncertainty and hard seasons is part of living a purpose-driven life.
 - The story of Ruth shows that God works through tragedy, loss, and brokenness to accomplish His redemptive purposes.
 - Scripture affirms that God has a personal plan for every individual, not just clergy or missionaries, but all people.
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Opening Question

Go around the group and briefly answer this question before diving into discussion:

If someone stopped you on the street and asked, "Why are you here on earth?" what would you say?

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Life Without God at the Center

1. The sermon described how purpose without God tends to become self-focused -- centered on personal happiness, satisfaction, ease, or material gain. Do you agree with that assessment? Have you seen that pattern in your own life or in the lives of others?
2. The pastor mentioned that people outside of a relationship with God can still do genuinely good and beautiful things in the world. How do you hold that truth alongside the idea that lasting, meaningful purpose is ultimately found in God?
3. The sermon asked: "What if the caring for others ends? What then is your purpose in life?" How would you answer that question?

Section 2: A God-Centered Purpose

4. The pastor drew a contrast between asking "What do I want to do with my life?" and asking "Who is God calling me to be?" How does shifting that question change the way you approach decisions, your career, your relationships, or your daily routine?
5. Jeremiah 29:11 describes God's promise of plans for hope and a future -- written in the context of God's people being taken into captivity, not in a season of ease or success. What does it mean to hold onto that promise in the middle of difficulty rather than only in good times?
6. The Heidelberg Catechism opens with the question, "What is your only comfort in life and in death?" and answers that we belong -- body and soul, in life and in death -- to Jesus Christ. How does belonging to Christ shape the way you think about your purpose?
7. The Westminster Shorter Catechism states that humanity's primary purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. What does it look like practically to "enjoy God" in your everyday life?

Section 3: Worship as a Way of Life

8. The sermon made the point that worship is not just singing songs on Sunday -- it extends to everything we do, including work, parenting, service, and ordinary tasks. How does thinking of your daily work as worship change how you approach it?
9. Colossians 3:23-24 calls us to work as though we are working for the Lord rather than for people. Where do you find that easy to live out? Where do you find it most difficult?

Section 4: Ruth and Purpose Through Hardship

10. Naomi's honest cry in Ruth 1:20 -- asking to be called Mara, meaning bitter -- reflects the pain of someone whose life did not go as planned. Have you ever felt that kind of bitterness or emptiness? How did you navigate it?
11. Ruth's declaration in Ruth 1:16 -- "Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, your God, my God" -- is a statement of faith made in the middle of grief and uncertainty. What does it look like to make that kind of commitment to God when life feels uncertain or painful?
12. The sermon pointed out that God's redemptive purpose was woven through Ruth's story even in the middle of tragedy -- ultimately leading to the lineage of Jesus. How does that perspective encourage you when you cannot see how God is at work in your own circumstances?

Section 5: Discovering Your Purpose

13. The pastor suggested asking yourself these questions to help discover purpose:

- How has God naturally gifted me?
- What interests do I have?
- How has God used circumstances to shape and mold me into who I am today?

Take a few minutes as a group to reflect on these questions. Are you willing to share one answer with the group?

14. The sermon described the pastor's own experience of not knowing what was ahead -- feeling like he was on a "need-to-know basis" with God -- and how looking back, he could see God's hand at work. Can you identify a season in your own life where you could not see the path clearly but can now look back and recognize God's faithfulness?
15. Proverbs 19:21 says that many plans fill a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. How do you hold your own plans and ambitions loosely while still pursuing them with diligence and faithfulness?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to practice individually or as a group before your next meeting:

- **Reframe your work this week.** Whatever your primary occupation or responsibility is -- a job, parenting, volunteering, caregiving -- approach it each day as an act of worship. At the end of the week, reflect on whether that shift in perspective changed anything about how you engaged with it.

- **Sit with the three purpose questions.** Set aside 15 to 20 minutes this week to journal your answers to the three questions the pastor raised: How has God gifted me? What are my genuine interests? How have my circumstances shaped me? Bring your reflections back to the group.
 - **Read the book of Ruth.** It is only four chapters long. Read it this week with an eye toward how God's purpose unfolds through loss, obedience, and unexpected circumstances. Note where you see yourself in the story.
 - **Have an honest conversation with God.** If you are in a season of bitterness, emptiness, or uncertainty about your purpose, follow Naomi's example and be honest with God about it. Write out a prayer that does not hold back -- and then sit quietly and read Jeremiah 29:11 afterward.
 - **Identify one person to encourage.** The sermon mentioned that living with purpose includes building others up. Think of one person in your life who may be struggling with questions of purpose or meaning. Reach out to them this week in a meaningful way.
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Closing Reflection

The sermon closed with this verse from Proverbs 19:21:

Many are the plans of a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

Close your group time by reading this verse aloud together. Then invite anyone who is willing to share one word that describes where they are right now in their own journey of discovering purpose. Close in prayer, asking God to lead each member of the group and to make His purposes clear -- even in the hard and uncertain seasons.