

Living on Purpose

Activity:	Duration
Dinner and Fellowship	60 Minutes
Teach the lesson "Tombstone Testimonies"	60 Minutes
Discussion of Application guide "Living on Purpose." and sharing of first draft purpose statements	90 Minutes
Prayer Time	30 Minutes

Leader Notes:

1. This is a **big** month. You are dealing with the core issues of life vision and planning and essentially living on purpose that they will deal with the rest of their lives. The guys need to come up with their purpose statements and be prepared to share them with the group. (At least their first draft)
2. The **Lesson** this month is titled "Tombstone Testimonies." You will note that the last section of the lesson, "Tombstone Testimonies," on goals has no blanks to fill in. So give it to the guys as is. Feel free to discuss some of it but watch your time. It's more important to focus on the concept of purpose than how to write goals this month, but it is helpful content. Your men may ask why you didn't teach this lesson *before* they were assigned to write their purpose statement. This is intentional. They will be much more motivated and ready to hear *after* they have invested time and effort on their own.
3. The **Application Guide** and the book have an obvious but only general connection. The application questions are not directly from the book. You will probably use most of your time to cover the questions in the application guide and have each man share the first draft of his mission statement. Refer to any parts of Andy Stanley's book that are helpful in your Discussion and as time allows. Encourage the men as they share their statements. Coach them for points of fine-tuning. Ask the other men if it "rings true" for what they know of the one sharing.
4. **Assignment for Special Project in Month 5:** Modelling after Daniel 6:10, challenge the guys to pray three times a day for 21 days.

¹⁰ Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Daniel 6:10

The purpose is to develop a more intimate and consistent prayer life. (The prayer time is actually on their knees.) The desired outcome is to help prayer become a natural part of daily life. Share stories and examples of guys in offices or cubes who actually get down on their knees and pray in the afternoon.

The men can track their prayer life for the month with the Daniel Days Prayer Tracker. Have them keep it where they can access it easily. It starts the day after the group meets, and you can include the dates accordingly. They simply check the boxes at the time they did pray and leave it blank if they missed that prayer.

5. Hand out copies of *The Pursuit of Holiness* by Jerry Bridges and the **Application Guide** that goes with it.

Lesson

Tombstone Testimonies

Living Your Life on Purpose

I. Five of the Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask and Answer

A. Do you live with **passion**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Weak

Strong

Insert illustration

This is the true joy in life — being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one, being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I've got a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

George Bernard Shaw

B. Do you live your life on **purpose**, by intention, and **deliberately**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Weak

Strong

Insert illustration

I went to the woods because I wanted to live deliberately. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life! To put to rest all that was not life. And not when I came to die, discover that I have not lived.

Henry David Thoreau

What price are you willing to pay to live deliberately?

C. How are you going to **ble**ss the world? (Make a significant contribution)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Weak

Strong

Insert illustration

Tchaikovsky put a sign on his gate: Visiting hours Monday and Tuesday between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. Other times, please do not ring. He was saying, "I'm a composer. This is how I'm going to bless the world — not by idle conversation."

D. What is your **dream**? (A vision bigger than yourself)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Weak

Strong

On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave one of history's most heart-stirring speeches, one with a voice and message still heard today for the civil rights movement. That speech, "I Have a Dream."

Doesn't have to be grand — one life changed!

E. What will your **Tombstone** say? (What will your legacy be?)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Weak

Strong

Insert illustration

What I really lack is to be clear in my mind that I am to do, what I am to know...The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do...to find the idea for which I can live and die.
Soren Kierkegaard

II. God Has a Purpose For You

It's not love God and serve man only. Good, but that is for all Christians.

You are not a random creation; there is something specific for you.

*Don't act thoughtlessly but try to find out and do whatever the Lord wants you to.
Ephesians 5:17 (The Living Bible)*

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)

Our responsibility is to do what we are good at rather than what we love doing. The secret here is that when you do begin doing what God wants, it is what brings you the greatest joy.

Saint Augustine said that asking yourself the questions of your own legacy — “What do I wish to be remembered for?” — is the beginning of adulthood.

Adulthood...maturity in Christ, or “growing up,” is the internal process that occurs when we discover and align ourselves with God's purpose and plan for our lives.

Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:13–16 (NIV)

*Jesus: “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”
John 17:4 (NIV)*

How could Jesus have said that?

People were still sick, lame, blind, lost, etc.

He knew his purpose!

Paul: “I only want to complete my mission and finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do...” Acts 20:24 (Good News)

What is the “Work” or “Purpose” God has given you?

The feeling of being hurried is not usually the result of living a full life and having no time. It is, on the contrary, born of a vague fear that we are wasting our life. When we do not do the one thing we ought to do, we have no time for

anything else — we are the busiest people in the world.
Eric Hoffer

III. The Process of Developing Your Purpose Statement

- A. Pray.** Ask **God** to reveal your specific purpose. You were created on purpose for a purpose.

God is a loving God. He would never hide his purpose for you!

- B. Be patient.** It is usually a long process.

God can give it to you in a moment. But the usual length of time, if there is no prior work done on it, is six to twelve months to finalize it. It can take eighteen months or longer if there are personal issues that must first be resolved.

- C. Take time to reflect** and examine your **motives**.

Do you have God's kingdom and the benefit of others as your primary desire?

- D. Seek wise counsel.**

Confide with two or three people to bounce ideas, stretch your thinking, and test for what "rings true" for you. Make sure they are positive people who know you well, believe in you and have wisdom you respect.

- E. Picture a decade** to assist you in the process.

Sometimes "visioning" the rest of your life is too overwhelming at first. Instead, begin by trying to see out as far as ten years. That will get you started in the right direction for your life's purpose.

- F. Make it specifically** for you, not generic in nature.

Begin by asking, "Why has God put me on this earth?" Don't answer with something like, "To glorify God and serve man." That's good, but it's generic. It's every Christian's mission. It's a foundational principle for all of us. God has created and designed you for a specific purpose. Write down why you are here.

- G. Don't aim for precision** or **perfection** at first.

You need time to "test" it and see how it "fits." Purpose statements can evolve even after they are well crafted and tightly in place. Sometimes God reshapes it as you mature in Christ. However, it's not likely to "shift" often and will usually follow a similar theme. It will always remain consistent with your spiritual gifts, biblical truth,

and God's will. So while you want to know as exactly as possible, relax a little as you begin the process.

H. Remember, the **shorter**, the better.

Once started, the normal tendency is to produce something like the Constitution of the United States for fear of leaving something out. But that is not practical and candidly doesn't work. One sentence is best. It must be short enough to memorize and internalize at a heart level.

I. Ask yourself the tough questions and be honest.

1. What am I passionate about?
2. What are my values and convictions?
3. What do I want to be doing in ten years? Twenty years?
4. What are my strengths and weaknesses?
5. Am I fulfilled in my career?
6. What is the primary loyalty in my life?
7. What do I want to be remembered for?
8. What is the condition of my family life?
9. What am I willing to die for?
10. How willing am I to take a risk?
11. Who are the people I admire most, and why?
12. What are my greatest fears, and am I willing to give them to God?
13. What do others think I do well?
14. What opportunities do I have?
15. What burdens in life tug at my heart?

The answers to these questions will give you tremendous insight into your purpose. For example, another question that consultant and author Bob Biehl gave me is, "If you could speak to any audience of any size for one hour, what would you speak on?"

J. Share the journey with your **spouse** or closest friend.

This is different from seeking wise counsel. Instead, this one focuses on a partner who prays with you, encourages you, and listens to you as you invest in the process of writing your purpose.

- K.** Make sure your purpose aligns with **Biblical** principles and values.

You may or may not have a “verse” just for you. But your purpose must be Biblically sound so that when confronted by scriptural truth, it could stand the test.

- L.** Begin Writing!

Just start writing. Begin by completing this statement.

“My purpose is to...”

Three Practical Insights About Your Purpose

1. Your purpose may or may not be consistent with your professional career. The Apostle Paul was a tentmaker!
2. You will realize both fruit and joy as you live out your purpose. Fruit only is drudgery, and joy only can be shallow. You must have both. (John 15)
3. You will experience nearly endless energy. Your purpose will be like fuel to a jet and allow you to fly.

IV. Setting and Achieving Your Goals

- A.** Defining goals

A goal is a statement of faith about a specific event in the future.

A goal is measurable by:

1. Time (rate)
2. Performance (goal completed)

Goals and the achievement of goals are not the primary aims of life. “Your life is a journey, a process that never ends. You never “arrive”; you are always learning and always growing.

Enjoy the journey!

We are all learners on the way...

Basically, you live your life into God. Goals merely provide a structure that is measurable so you can see how well you are doing and the progress you are making. (PARADOX)...It's true; God is more concerned with who you are than what you do. But because we are unable to state measurable and accomplishable goals for who we should be, what we are is, in fact, measured by what we do.

Your purpose statement, life values, and goals provide guidelines by which you live your life into God. They prevent chaos and, ultimately, a wasted life. They help provide a productive, meaningful existence.

B. The value of goals

1. Goals motivate you. (Especially in tough times)
2. Goals help you realize your purpose.
3. Goals keep your priorities straight. (Tyranny of the urgent)
4. Goals channel and maximize your potential.

To make family, career, and ministry effective, take the emphasis off activity and put it on productivity.

5. Goals give you power to live in the present.
6. Goals force you to plan ahead.
7. Goals promote enthusiasm in your life.

C. Ten steps to goal planning

1. Prepare your goals in the framework of your biblical principles.
2. Make your goals realistic.
3. Write your goals down.
4. Make your goals specific.
5. Make the goals measurable.
6. Make sure the goals are your own.

7. Surround yourself with the people you need to accomplish your goals.
8. Ask: "Am I willing to pay the price?"
9. Reward yourself for the accomplishment.
10. Give God the glory.

Long-range goals: The first set of goals you write for as far out as you do the planning.

D. Six steps to achieve your goals

1. Attach a date to every goal.
2. Write down how you will accomplish your goals. (Strategy, plans, etc.)
3. Define the steps needed to accomplish these goals as your intermediate goals.
4. Go from general to more specific with your intermediate goals.
5. If you do not have intermediate goals, go directly to immediate goals (daily to-do list) from your long-range goals.
6. Rate your goals A, B, C, A-1, etc.

Application Guide

Living On Purpose

With a Sense of Personal Purpose and Vision

I. Establishing and Achieving Your Focus in Life

A. What is the value of focus in your life?

B. Do you feel you are focused in your overall life direction and purpose? Explain.

C. On a scale of 1–10 do you find your current place in life fulfilling and meaningful — briefly explain.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Don't Know What
My Game Is

At The Top
Of My Game

D. If you occasionally find your schedule "out of control," describe why you think that happens.

E. Write out your own definition of freedom. Then, describe how you can get it.

F. What prevents you from making the necessary commitment to becoming strongly "focused" on a clear direction and set of life values and priorities?

II. The Values You Live By

You need a tall cup of coffee, probably several, to begin this process. Candidly, you won't get this done in one session or even in one month. But you can make great progress. The goal is to get a great start.

List out your personal values in life. Don't make the list too long. I can't tell you how many should be on your list, but I will offer a guideline to you. If you get more than 7–9 you probably have too many.

As you begin the process, don't write a mental "academic" list of what should be, but a set of values you are willing to die for. Think deep and be honest. Don't write to impress anyone. Write what you want to live. Write what you are willing and committed to living.

Each value can be stated in a short phrase or a short sentence. These values will give you good insight into your mission. Your mission and your values must be in total alignment with each other.

You may want to add a scripture reference to each one.

Example:

1. Faith
2. Family
3. Integrity
4. Positive Attitude
5. Physical Fitness

My values are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

III. Writing Your Personal Purpose Statement

Start thinking, dreaming, "visioning," and praying about your own purpose statement.

Start by answering the question:

WHY HAS GOD PUT ME ON THIS EARTH?

Be sure not to answer, "to glorify and praise Him," etc. This, of course, is good, but that is everyone's (universal) purpose; it's a given. However, God has YOU here for a specific reason...for a specific (unique) purpose!!

Helpful Ideas:

1. Pray first...ask God for guidance.
2. Be brief — one sentence (the shorter, the better).
3. Make it specifically for you — not generic in nature.
4. Picture a decade (10-year span) to assist in the process.
5. Remember, it can be reshaped as you mature in Christ.
6. Don't worry about perfection; it can take a long time to develop.
7. Don't try to do it all in one sitting.

Discover Your God-Given (Unique) Purpose

Note: Your Christian “universal” purpose is to love God and serve people. Your “unique” purpose falls under that ultimate purpose. Your unique purpose is answering that grand question — Why has God placed you here on planet earth? What has He created you to do?

Questions: These questions are a “snapshot” of affirmation, or lack thereof, of your purpose statement. They are not a primary tool in the development of your purpose, but they will give you insight into your purpose.

1. What can you do well? (Talent)
2. What do you want to do? (Desire)
3. What do you do well? (Results)
4. What do others think you do well? (Recognition)
5. What opportunities do you have? (Circumstances)
6. What do you enjoy doing? (Pleasure)

D. Write out one or two goals you set and didn't accomplish last year, and tell why you think you didn't accomplish each one.

E. Each of us has several different roles we must play as a man — listed are the primary roles.

- a. (Don't worry about right, wrong, or what anyone else thinks; just *write* goals that *you* really *want* to achieve!)
- b. Note: You are likely not to be working on all of these goals at the same time.

- Son of God
- Husband
- Dad
- Friend
- Provider

Mark an X in each box indicating that you prayed.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
May 1			
May 2			
May 3			
May 4			
May 5			
May 6			
May 7			
May 8			
May 9			
May 10			
May 11			
May 12			
May 13			
May 14			
May 15			
May 16			
May 17			
May 18			
May 19			
May 20			
May 21			

Total Potential Prayer Sessions 63

Total Completed Prayer Sessions