

S L O W W

Eternal Purpose: “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren (Book Summary)

BY KYLE KOWALSKI
([HTTPS://WWW.SLOWW.CO/AUTHOR/KYLE-KOWALSKI/](https://www.sloww.co/author/kyle-kowalski/)) //



I'm currently on a mission to read the best books on life purpose. *The Purpose Driven Life* (Amazon) (<https://amzn.to/2SLhHU3>) by Rick Warren is in the top 3 (and quite possibly #1 in terms of sales). I read this book immediately after finishing *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* (book summary) (<https://www.slowww.co/eckhart-tolle-a-new-earth-101/>) by Eckhart Tolle. You would think Christianity and New Age spirituality would be completely opposite ends of the spectrum; as you'll see in my next post, these two books say 80-90% of the same exact thing. Whether you're religious, spiritual, or neither, *The Purpose Driven Life* has some deep quotes (<https://www.slowww.co/deep-life-quotes-2019/>) and insights on the meaning of life.

The Purpose Driven Life had apparently sold over 30 million copies by 2007. The updated book cover now says over 34 million copies have sold, but Wikipedia claims the number is actually over 60 million. Either way, it's *a lot*—so many that it's been translated into over 85 languages. And, not only is it a top book on life purpose, but it's consistently in the top 50 books of all-time. Publishers Weekly claims it is the “bestselling nonfiction hardback in history.” You can watch a good TED Talk by Rick Warren in this *Purpose Driven Life* teaser post (<https://www.slowww.co/purpose-driven-life/>).

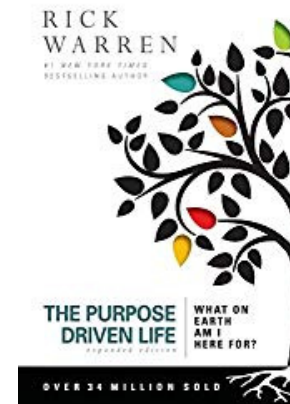
only the text in **bold**. If you want a one-minute summary, read only the text in boxes!

To skip to a specific section within this post, use the links below:

- [**Purpose of the Book**](#)
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For? by Rick Warren

- (https://www.amazon.com/Purpose-Driven-Life-What-Earth/dp/031033750X/ref=as_li_ss_il?ie=UTF8&qid=1547000348&sr=8-3&keywords=purpose+driven+life&linkCode=li3&tag=slowwco-20&linkId=03faeb6938e4889ebd715eeaa9c448a8&language=en_US)“This is more than a book; it is a guide



- to a **40-day spiritual journey** that will enable you to discover the answer to life's most important question: What on earth am I here for? By the end of this journey you will know God's purpose for your life and will understand the big picture — how all the pieces of your life fit together. **Having this perspective will reduce your stress, simplify your decisions, increase your satisfaction, and, most important, prepare you for eternity.**
- “As I wrote this book, I often prayed that you would **experience the incredible sense of hope, energy, and joy that comes from discovering what God put you on this planet to do.** There's nothing quite like it. I am excited because I know all the great things that are going to happen to you. They happened to me, and I have never been the same since I discovered the purpose of my life.”
- “**Every new generation must rediscover God's purposes for themselves.** But God also adds that the older generation is responsible to pass on what they have learned ‘so that each generation can set its hope anew on God’ (Psalm 78:7 NLT).”
- “There is no greater epitaph than that statement! **Imagine it chiseled on your tombstone: That you served God's purpose in your generation.**”
- “This phrase is the ultimate definition of a life well lived. **You do the eternal and timeless (God's purpose) in a contemporary and timely way (in your generation). That is what the purpose-driven life is all about.** Neither past nor future generations can serve God's purpose in this generation. Only we can.”
- “**Hope is as essential to your life as air and water. You need hope to cope.** Dr. Bernie Siegel found he could predict which of his cancer patients would go into

- **“Preparing you for these two questions is the goal of this book. The first question will determine *where* you spend eternity. The second question will determine *what you do* in eternity.** By the end of this book you will be ready to answer both questions.”

1. “What did you do with my Son, Jesus Christ?”
2. “What did you do with what I gave you?”

Life *without* a Purpose Driven Life

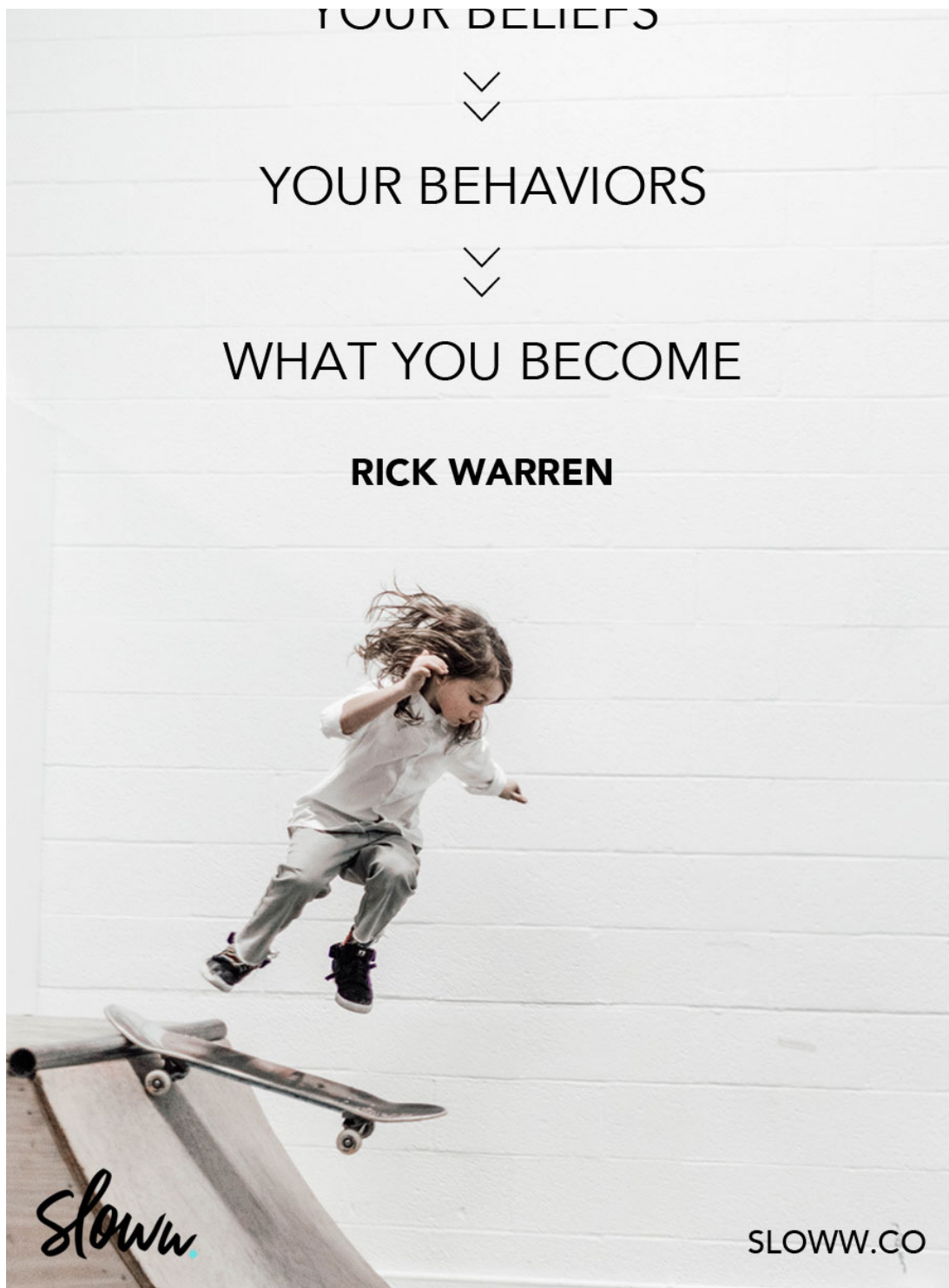
“The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder — a waif, a nothing, a no man.” —

Thomas Carlyle

“Nothing matters more than knowing God ‘s purposes for your life, and nothing can compensate for not knowing them — not success, wealth, fame, or pleasure. **Without a purpose, life is motion without meaning, activity without direction, and events without reason.** Without a purpose, life is trivial, petty, and pointless.”

- **“The greatest tragedy is not death, but life without purpose.”**
- “When Cain sinned, his guilt disconnected him from God’s presence, and God said, ‘You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.’ That describes **most people today — wandering through life without a purpose.**”
- **“Without a clear purpose, you will keep changing** directions, jobs, relationships, churches, or other externals — hoping each change will settle the confusion or fill the emptiness in your heart. You think, *maybe this time it will be different*, but it doesn’t solve your real problem — a lack of focus and purpose.”
- “Without a clear purpose you have no foundation on which you base decisions, allocate your time, and use your resources. You will tend to make choices based

- **“Knowing your purpose gives meaning to your life.** We were made to have meaning. This is why people try dubious methods, like astrology or psychics, to discover it. When life has meaning, you can bear almost anything; without it, nothing is bearable.”
- **“Without God, life has no purpose, and without purpose, life has no meaning.** Without meaning, life has no significance or hope.”



Challenging Cultural Norms

life? What are *my* goals, *my* ambitions, *my* dreams for *my* future? But **focusing on ourselves will never reveal our life's purpose.**"

- "For thousands of years, brilliant philosophers have discussed and speculated about the meaning of life. Philosophy is an important subject and has its uses, but **when it comes to determining the purpose of life, even the wisest philosophers are just guessing.**"
- "Contrary to what many popular books, movies, and seminars tell you, **you won't discover your life's meaning by looking within yourself.** You have probably tried that already. **You didn't create yourself, so there is no way you can tell yourself what you were created for!**"
- "I have read many books that suggest ways to discover the purpose of my life. All of them could be classified as 'self-help' books because they approach the subject from a self-centered viewpoint. **Self-help books, even Christian ones, usually offer the same predictable steps to finding your life's purpose:** Consider your dreams. Clarify your values. Set some goals. Figure out what you are good at. Aim high. Go for it! Be disciplined. Believe you can achieve your goals. Involve others. Never give up."
- "You need more than self-help advice. The Bible says, '**Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way,** my way, to finding yourself, your true self.'"
- "This is not a self-help book. It is not about finding the right career, achieving your dreams, or planning your life. It is not about how to cram more activities into an overloaded schedule. Actually, **it will teach you how to do less in life — by focusing on what matters most.** It is about becoming what *God* created you to be."
- "God is not just the starting point of your life; he is the *source* of it. **To discover your purpose in life you must turn to God's Word, not the world's wisdom. You must build your life on eternal truths,** not pop psychology, success-motivation, or inspirational stories."

Busyness, Slowing Down, & Simple Living

*"A life devoted to things is a dead life, a stump; a God-shaped life is a flourishing tree." —
Proverbs 11:28 (MSG)*

"Busyness (<https://www.sloww.co/busyness-101/>) is a great enemy of relationships. We become preoccupied with making a living, doing our work, paying bills, and accomplishing goals as if these tasks are the point of life. They are not. **The point of life is learning to love — God and people. Life minus love equals zero.**"

- **"God views our lives *from* and *for* eternity, so he is never in a hurry."**
- "Today we're obsessed with speed, but God is more interested in strength and stability than swiftness. **We want the quick fix (<https://www.sloww.co/the-slow-fix-book-carl-honore/>)**, the shortcut, the on-the-spot solution. We want a sermon, a seminar, or an **experience (<https://www.sloww.co/experiences-vs-things/>)** that will instantly resolve all problems, remove all temptation, and release us from all growing pains. But **real maturity is never the result of a single experience, no matter how powerful or moving. Growth is gradual.**"
- "Be patient with God and with yourself. One of life's frustrations is that God's timetable is rarely the same as ours. **We are often in a hurry when God isn't.** You may feel frustrated with the seemingly slow progress you're making in life. Remember that **God is never in a hurry, but he is always on time.** He will use your entire lifetime to prepare you for your role in eternity."
- **"Knowing your purpose simplifies your life.** It defines what you do and what you don't do. Your purpose becomes the standard you use to **evaluate which**

- **"Your value is not determined by your valuables**
(<https://www.sloww.co/lifestyle-inflation/>), and God says the most valuable things in life are not things!"
- **"Money (<https://www.sloww.co/fire-101/>) has the greatest potential to replace God in your life.** More people are sidetracked from serving by **materialism**
(<https://www.sloww.co/keeping-up-with-the-joneses/>) than by anything else."
- "The Bible is very clear: **God uses money to test your faithfulness** as a servant. That is why Jesus talked more about money than he did about either heaven or hell."

The Purpose of Suffering

"Pain is God's megaphone." — C. S. Lewis

"Your most profound and intimate experiences of worship will likely be in your darkest days — when your heart is broken, when you feel abandoned, when you're out of options, when the pain is great — and you turn to God alone. **It is during suffering that we learn to pray our most authentic, heartfelt, honest-to-God prayers.** When we're in pain, we don't have the energy for superficial prayers."

- "In order to keep us from becoming too attached to earth, God allows us to feel a significant amount of discontent and dissatisfaction in life — longings that will *never* be fulfilled on this side of eternity. **We're not completely happy here because we're not supposed to be!** Earth is not our final home; we were created for something much better."
- **"Pain is the fuel of passion** — it energizes us with an intensity to change that we don't normally possess."

- “The secret of endurance is to remember that **your pain is temporary** but your reward will be eternal.”
- “**We’re only human! If it takes a crisis to get you to admit this** (<https://www.sloww.co/existential-crisis/>), God won’t hesitate to allow it, because he loves you.”
- “**God often attaches a major weakness to a major strength to keep our egos in check.** A limitation can act as a governor to keep us from going too fast and running ahead of God.”
- “**Your greatest life messages and your most effective ministry** (<https://www.sloww.co/effective-altruism/>) **will come out of your deepest hurts.**”

The Thinking Mind

“We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.” — Anaïs Nin

“If I asked how you picture life, what image would come to your mind? That image is your life metaphor. It’s the view of life that you hold, consciously or unconsciously (<https://www.sloww.co/this-is-water-david-foster-wallace/>), in your mind. It’s your description of how life works and what you expect from it.”

- “**The way you see your life shapes your life.**”
- “**How you define life determines your destiny. Your perspective will influence how you invest your time** (<https://www.sloww.co/daily-life-quotes/>), spend your money, use your talents, and value your relationships.”
- “**Change your autopilot — the way you think.** The Bible says, ‘Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.’ **Your first step in spiritual**

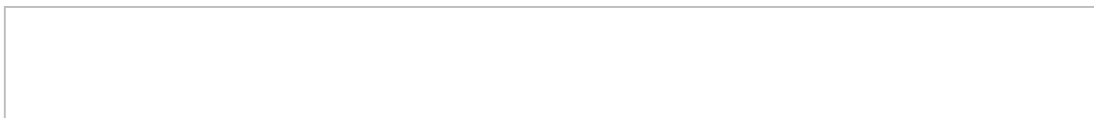
- conform us, but eternal truths transform us.**"
- **"To change your life, you must change the way you think.** Behind everything you do is a thought. Every behavior is motivated by a belief, and every action is prompted by an attitude."
 - **"God is always more interested in why (<https://www.sloww.co/5-whys/>) we do something than in what we do.** Attitudes count more than achievements."
 - "It has never been easier in history to fulfill your commission to go to the whole world. The great barriers are no longer distance, cost, or transportation. **The only barrier is the way we *think*.** To be a world-class Christian **you must make some mental shifts.** Your perspective and attitudes must change."
 - **"Shift from self-centered thinking to other-centered thinking (<https://www.sloww.co/overview-effect/>)."**
 - **"Shift from local thinking to global thinking (<https://www.sloww.co/spaceship-earth/>)."**
 - **"Shift from 'here and now' thinking (<https://www.sloww.co/eckhart-tolle-a-new-earth-301/>) to eternal thinking."**
 - **"The battle for sin is won or lost in your mind.** Whatever gets your attention will get you."
 - **"Spiritually, your mind is your most vulnerable organ."**
 - **"If you're serious about defeating temptation **you must manage your mind and monitor your media intake** (<https://www.sloww.co/digital-minimalism/>)."**

Character Development

"God's ultimate goal for your life on earth is not comfort, but character development. He wants you to grow up spiritually and become like Christ. Becoming like Christ does not mean losing your personality or becoming a mindless clone. God created your uniqueness, so he certainly doesn't want to

- **"God is far more interested in what you are than in what you do. We are human beings, not human doings. (<https://www.sloww.co/brain-pickings-maria-popova/>)** God is much more concerned about your character than your career, because you will take your character into eternity, but not your career."
- "Never forget that life is not about you! You exist for God's purposes, not vice versa. Why would God provide *heaven on earth* when he's planned the real thing for you in eternity? **God gives us our time on earth to build and strengthen our character for heaven.**"
- "We must 'put on' the character of Christ by developing new, godly habits. **Your character is essentially the sum of your habits; it is how you *habitually* act.**"
- "Nothing shapes your life more than the commitments you choose to make. **Your commitments can develop you or they can destroy you, but either way, they will define you.** Tell me what you are committed to, and I'll tell you what you will be in twenty years. **We become whatever we are committed to.**"
- **"Every problem is a character-building opportunity**, and the more difficult it is, the greater the potential for building spiritual muscle and moral fiber."
- **"What happens outwardly in your life is not as important as what happens *inside* you.** Your circumstances are temporary, but your character will last forever."
- "This next sentence is one of the most important spiritual truths you will ever learn: God develops the fruit of the Spirit in your life by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you're tempted to express *the exact opposite quality*! **Character development always involves a choice, and temptation provides that opportunity.**"

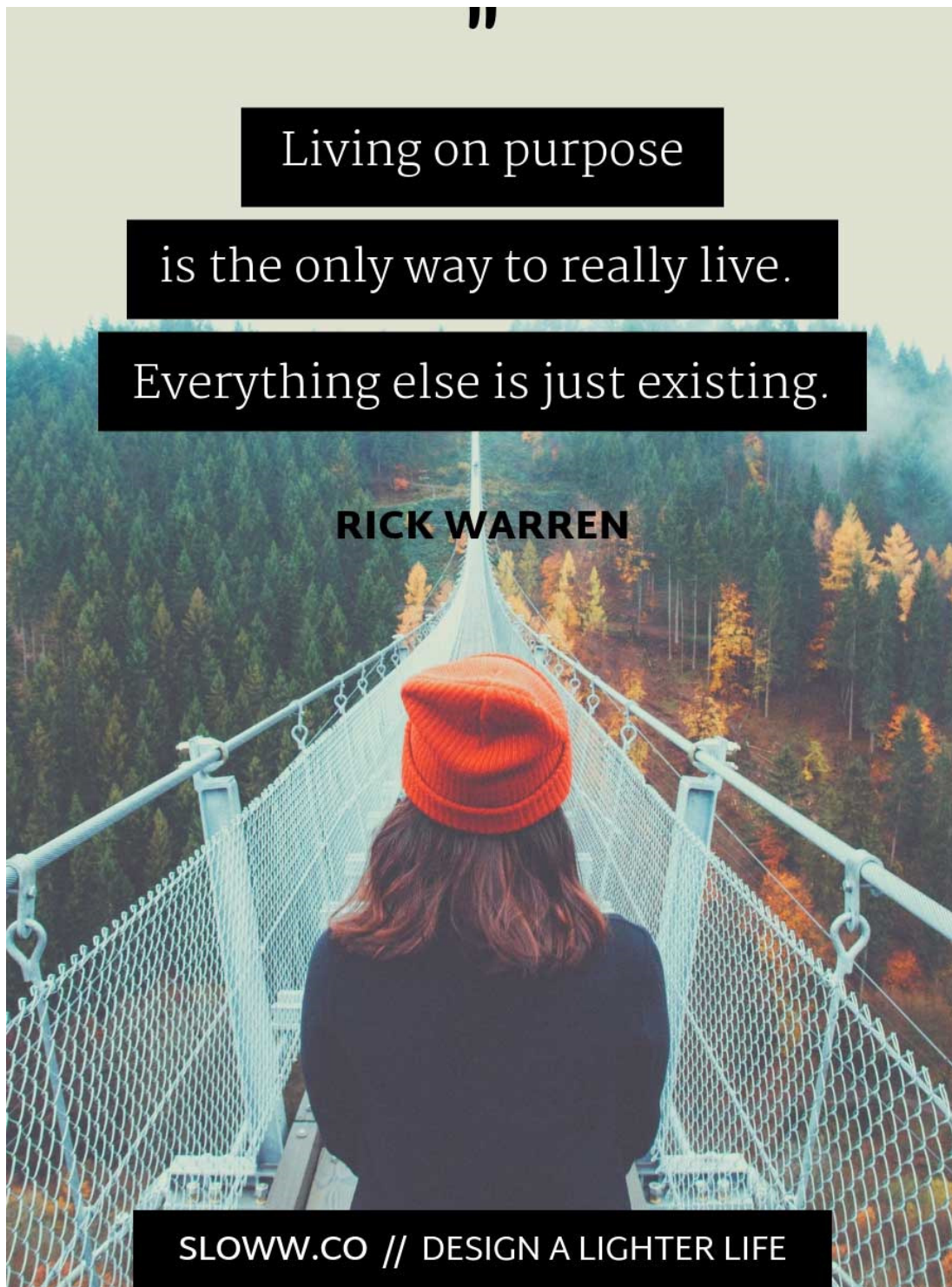
Spiritual Growth



must eat and exercise to grow.”

- **“We must change the way we think.** ‘Let the Spirit change your way of thinking.’ **The Bible says we are ‘transformed’ by the renewing of our minds.** The Greek word for transformed, *metamorphosis* (used in Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18), is used today to describe the amazing change a caterpillar goes through in becoming a butterfly. It is a beautiful picture of what happens to us spiritually when we allow God to direct our thoughts: **We are changed from the inside out, we become more beautiful, and we are set free to soar to new heights.**“
- **“Becoming like Christ is a long, slow process of growth** (<https://www.sloww.co/slow-living-101/>). Spiritual maturity is neither instant nor automatic; it is a gradual, progressive development that **will take the rest of your life.**”
- **“You are a work in progress.** Your spiritual transformation in developing the character of Jesus will take the rest of your life, and even then it won’t be completed here on earth. **It will only be finished when you get to heaven or when Jesus returns.**“
- “Your heavenly Father’s goal is for you to mature and develop the characteristics of Jesus Christ. **Sadly, millions of Christians *grow older but never grow up*. They are stuck in perpetual spiritual infancy**, remaining in diapers and booties. The reason is that they never *intended* to grow.”
- **“Spiritual growth is not automatic. It takes an intentional commitment.** You must *want* to grow, *decide* to grow, *make an effort* to grow, and *persist* in growing. Discipleship — the process of becoming like Christ — always begins with a decision.”
- **“Thinking of others is the heart of Christlikeness and the best evidence of spiritual growth.** This kind of thinking is unnatural, counter-cultural, rare, and difficult.”
- “Living the rest of your life for the glory of God **will require a change in your priorities**, your schedule, your relationships, and everything else. It will

existing.”



Living on purpose

is the only way to really live.

Everything else is just existing.

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It all Starts with God (it's not about you)

peace of mind, or even your **happiness (<https://www.sloww.co/mo-gawdat-happiness-equation/>)**. It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. **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."

- **"You were made *by* God and *for* God — and until you understand that, life will never make sense.** It is only in God that we discover our origin, our identity, our meaning, our purpose, our significance, and our destiny. **Every other path leads to a dead end.**"
- "Fortunately, there is an alternative to speculation about the meaning and purpose of life. It's *revelation*. We can turn to what God has revealed about life in his Word. **The easiest way to discover the purpose of an invention is to ask the creator of it. The same is true for discovering your life's purpose: Ask God.**"
- "God wants to use you to make a difference in his world. He wants to work through you. **What matters is not the *duration* of your life, but the *donation* of it.** Not *how long* you lived, but *how* you lived."

The Master Plan

"There's a Grand Designer behind everything. Your life is not a result of random chance, fate, or luck. **There is a master plan.**"

- "Because every day of your life was written on God's calendar before you were born, ***everything* that happens to you has spiritual significance.** Everything!"
- **"Nothing in your life is arbitrary.** It's all for a purpose."

- **"God formed every creature on this planet with a special area of expertise."**
- **"You are not an assembly-line product, mass produced without thought. You are a custom-designed, one-of-a-kind, original masterpiece."**

Eternity

"Knowing your purpose prepares you for eternity. Many people spend their lives trying to create a lasting legacy on earth. They want to be remembered when they're gone. Yet, what **ultimately matters most will not be what others say about your life but what God says.**"

- **"Living to create an earthly legacy is a shortsighted goal. A wiser use of time is to build an *eternal* legacy.** You weren't put on earth to be remembered. **You were put here to prepare for eternity.**"
- **"Life on earth is just the dress rehearsal before the real production. You will spend far more time on the other side of death — *in eternity* — than you will here."**
- **"At most, you will live a hundred years on earth (<https://www.sloww.co/blue-zones-ikarians-simple-living/>), but you will spend forever in eternity."**
- **"When you fully comprehend that there is more to life than just here and now, and you realize that **life is just preparation for eternity**, you will begin to live differently. You will start *living in light of eternity*, and that will color how you handle every relationship, task, and circumstance. Suddenly many activities, goals, and even problems that seemed so important will appear trivial, petty, and unworthy of your attention. **The closer you live to God, the smaller everything else appears.**"**
- **"Every act of our lives strikes some chord that will vibrate in eternity."**

and now!"

- "You may feel it's morbid to think about death, but actually it's unhealthy to live in denial of death and not consider what is inevitable. Only a fool would go through life unprepared for what we all know will eventually happen. **You need to think more about eternity, not less.**"
- "**Retirement is a short-sighted goal.** (<https://www.sloww.co/millennial-retire/>) **You should be living in light of eternity.**"
- "Every choice has eternal consequences, so you had better choose wisely."

Life is a Test, Trust, & Temporary Assignment

"The Bible offers three metaphors that teach us God's view of life: Life is a *test*, life is a *trust*, and life is a *temporary assignment*. These ideas are **the foundation of purpose-driven living.**"

Life is a Test:

- "Character is both developed and revealed by tests, and **all of life is a test**. You are *always* being tested."
- "**When you understand that life is a test, you realize that *nothing* is insignificant in your life.** Even the smallest incident has significance for your character development. *Every* day is an important day, and every second is a growth opportunity to deepen your character, to demonstrate love, or to depend on God."

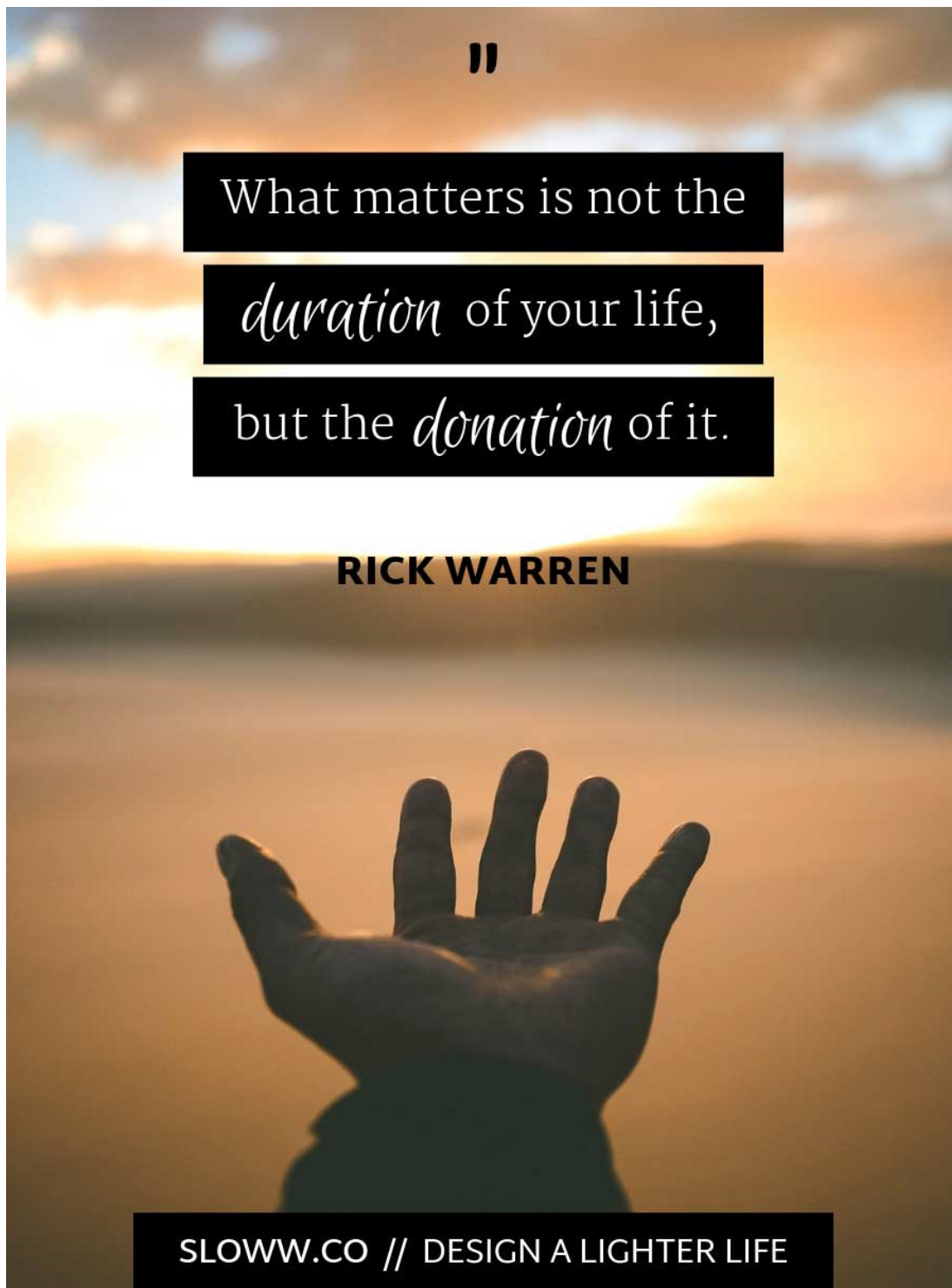
Life is a Trust:

- "Our time on earth and our energy, intelligence, opportunities, relationships, and resources are all gifts from God that he has entrusted to our care and

- **"We never really own anything during our brief stay on earth. God just *loans* the earth to us while we're here.** It was God's property before you arrived, and God will loan it to someone else after you die. You just get to enjoy it for a while."

Life is a Temporary Assignment:

- "To make the best use of your life, you must **never forget two truths: First, compared with eternity, life is extremely brief. Second, earth is only a temporary residence.** You won't be here long, so don't get too attached."
- "In God's eyes, the greatest heroes of faith are not those who achieve prosperity, success, and power in this life, but those who **treat this life as a temporary assignment and serve faithfully**, expecting their promised reward in eternity."
- "So much of what we waste our energy on will not matter even a year from now, much less for eternity. **Don't trade your life for temporary things.**"



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What matters is not the
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but the *donation* of it.

RICK WARREN

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3 Insights & 3 Basic Issues

Christ.

2. God was thinking of you long before you ever thought about him. His purpose for your life predates your conception. He planned it before you existed, *without your input!* **You may choose your career, your spouse, your hobbies, and many other parts of your life, but you don't get to choose your purpose.**
3. **The purpose of your life fits into a much larger, cosmic purpose** (<https://www.sloww.co/eckhart-tolle-a-new-earth-201/>) that God has designed for eternity.

Most people struggle with three basic issues in life:

1. The first is **identity**: "Who am I?"
2. The second is **importance**: "Do I matter?"
3. The third is **impact**: "What is my place in life?"

The answers to all three questions are found in God's five purposes for you.

God's 5 Purposes for Your Life

The book is primarily structured around the following five purposes. The theme of "**five**" comes up multiple times to reiterate the point, including:

- "God designed his church specifically to help you **fulfill the five purposes he has for your life**. He created the church to **meet your five deepest needs**: a purpose to live for, people to live with, principles to live by, a profession to live out, and power to live on."
- "God wants to redeem human beings from Satan and reconcile them to himself so we can **fulfill the five purposes he created us for**: to love him, to be a part of his family, to become like him, to serve him, and to tell others about him."

- purposes, the fifth can only be done on earth.** The other four you will keep doing in eternity in some way. That's why spreading the Good News is so important; you only have a short time to share your life message and fulfill your mission."
- **"While God created each of us for the same five eternal purposes, *the way you fulfill those purposes* — the time, place, plan, and style — *is absolutely unique.*"**

PURPOSE #1: YOU WERE PLANNED FOR GOD'S PLEASURE

- **"'Love God with all your heart': You were planned for God's pleasure, so your purpose is to love God through *worship.*"**
- "Bringing enjoyment to God, living for his pleasure, is the first purpose of your life."
- "The Bible says, 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.'"
- "Since pleasing God is the first purpose of your life, your most important task is to discover how to do that."
- "God says, 'You have no right to argue with your Creator. **You are merely a clay pot shaped by a potter.** (<https://www.sloww.co/cracked-pot/>) The clay doesn't ask, 'Why did you make me this way?'"

PURPOSE #2: YOU WERE FORMED FOR GOD'S FAMILY

- **"'baptize them into...': You were formed for God's family, so your purpose is to identify with his church through *fellowship.*"**
- "After learning to love God (worship), learning to love others is the second purpose of your life."
- "Because God is love, **the most important lesson he wants you to learn on earth is how to love.**"

PURPOSE #3: YOU WERE CREATED TO BECOME LIKE CHRIST

- **“teach them to do all things...’: You were created to become like Christ, so your purpose is to grow to maturity through *discipleship*.”**
- “From the very beginning, God’s plan has been to make you like his Son, Jesus. This is your destiny and the third purpose of your life.”
- “In all of creation, only human beings are made ‘in God’s image.’ This is a great privilege and gives us dignity. We don’t know *all* this phrase covers, but we do know some of the aspects it includes: Like God, **we are *spiritual beings***—our spirits are immortal and will outlast our earthly bodies; **we are *intellectual***—we can think, reason, and solve problems; like God, **we are *relational***—we can give and receive real love; and **we have a *moral consciousness***—we can discern right from wrong, which makes us accountable to God.”

PURPOSE #4: YOU WERE SHAPED FOR SERVING GOD

- **“Love your neighbor as yourself”: You were shaped for serving (<https://www.sloww.co/commencement-speeches/>), so your purpose is to show love for others through *ministry*.”**
- “You weren’t created just to consume resources — to eat, breathe, and take up space. God designed you to make a difference with your life. While many best-selling books offer advice on how to ‘*get*’ the most out of life, that’s not the reason God made you. **You were created to *add* to life on earth, not just take from it.** God wants you to give something back.”
- “A saved heart is one that wants to serve.”
- “Regardless of your job or career, you are called to full-time Christian service.”

share God's message through evangelism."

- "God is at work in the world, and he wants you to join him. This assignment is called your *mission*."
- **"Your life mission is both *shared* and *specific*. One part of it is a responsibility you share with every other Christian, and the other part is an assignment that is unique to you."**
- "The mission Jesus had while on earth is now our mission because we are the Body of Christ. What he did in his physical body we are to continue as his spiritual body, the church. **What is that mission? Introducing people to God!**"
- "If you are a part of God's family, your mission is mandatory. To ignore it would be disobedience."
- "You may have been unaware that **God holds you responsible for the unbelievers** who live around you."
- "Jesus has secured our salvation, put us in his family, given us his Spirit, and then made us his agents in the world. What a privilege!"
- **"We have the greatest news in the world, and sharing it is the greatest kindness you can show to anyone."**
- **"Your mission has eternal significance.** It will impact the eternal destiny of other people, so it's more important than any job, achievement, or goal you will reach during your life on earth. **The consequences of your mission will last forever; the consequences of your job will not.** Nothing else you do will ever matter as much as helping people establish an eternal relationship with God."
- **"Your mission gives your life meaning.** William James said, "The best use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it." **The truth is, only the kingdom of God is going to last. Everything else will eventually vanish.** That is why we must live purpose-driven lives — lives committed to worship, fellowship, spiritual growth, ministry, and fulfilling our mission on earth. The results of these activities will last — forever!"

Proverb

- **“Whenever God gives us an assignment, he always equips us with what we need to accomplish it.** This custom combination of capabilities is called your SHAPE.”
- **“Using your shape is the secret of both fruitfulness and fulfillment in ministry.** You will be most effective when you use your *spiritual gifts* and *abilities* in the area of your *heart’s desire*, and in a way that best expresses your *personality* and *experiences*. The better the fit, the more successful you will be.”
- **“Your *primary* ministry should be in the area of your shape, but your *secondary* service is wherever you’re needed at the moment.”**
- **“The best use of your life is to serve God out of your shape.** To do this you must discover your shape, learn to accept and enjoy it, and then develop it to its fullest potential.”
- “John Wesley was an incredible servant of God. His motto was ‘Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can.’ *That is greatness.*”

SHAPE: Unwrapping Your *Spiritual Gifts*

- **“God gives every believer spiritual gifts to be used in ministry. These are special God-empowered abilities for serving him that are given only to believers.”**
- “You can’t earn your spiritual gifts or deserve them — that’s why they are called *gifts*! They are an expression of God’s grace to you. ‘Christ has generously divided out his gifts to us.’ Neither do you get to choose which gifts you’d like to have; God determines that.”

SHAPE: Listening to Your Heart

the source of all your motivations — what you love to do and what you care about most.”

- “Another word for heart is *passion*.”
- “How do you know when you are serving God from your heart? The first telltale sign is *enthusiasm*. When you are doing what you love to do, no one has to motivate you or challenge you or check up on you. You do it for the sheer enjoyment.”
- “The second characteristic of serving God from your heart is *effectiveness*. Whenever you do what God wired you to love to do, you get good at it.”
- “We have all heard people say, ‘I took a job I hate in order to make a lot of money, so someday I can quit and do what I love to do.’ That’s a big mistake. **Don’t waste your life in a job that doesn’t express your heart. Remember, the greatest things in life are not *things*. Meaning is far more important than money.**”
- “Don’t settle for just achieving ‘the good life,’ because the good life is not good enough. Ultimately it doesn’t satisfy. You can have a lot to live *on* and still have nothing to live *for*. **Aim instead for ‘the better life’** — serving God in a way that expresses your heart. Figure out what you love to do — what God gave you a heart to do — and then do it for his glory.”

SHAPE: **Applying Your Abilities**

- **“Your abilities are the natural talents you were born with.”**
- “Since your natural abilities are from God, they are just as important and as ‘spiritual’ as your spiritual gifts. The only difference is that you were given them at birth.”
- “To discover God’s will for your life, you should **seriously examine what you are good at doing and what you’re not good at.**”
- “God doesn’t waste abilities; he **matches our calling and our capabilities.**”

SHAPE: Using Your Personality

- “Your personality will affect *how* and *where* you use your spiritual gifts and abilities.”

SHAPE: Employing Your Experiences

- **“You can *learn* from the examples of others, but you must filter what you learn through your own *shape*.”**
- “You have been shaped by your experiences in life, most of which were beyond your control. God allowed them for his purpose of molding you. In determining your shape for serving God, you should examine at least six kinds of experiences from your past:”
 - **“Family experiences:** What did you learn growing up in your family?”
 - **“Educational experiences:** What were your favorite subjects in school?”
 - **“Vocational experiences:** What jobs have you been most effective in and enjoyed most?”
 - **“Spiritual experiences:** What have been your most meaningful times with God?”
 - **“Ministry experiences:** How have you served God in the past?”
 - **“Painful experiences:** What problems, hurts, thorns, and trials have you learned from?”

Serving

“The glory of God is a human being fully alive!” — St. Irenaeus

said, "Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. This is what it means to 'lose your life' — forgetting yourself in service to others."

- **"We are only fully alive when we're helping others."**
- **"Most of the time we're more interested in 'serve us' than service."**
- **"In heaven God is going to openly reward some of his most obscure and unknown servants** — people we have never heard of on earth, who taught emotionally disturbed children, cleaned up after incontinent elderly, nursed AIDS patients, and served in thousands of other unnoticed ways."
- **"The quality of self-forgetfulness, like faithfulness, is extremely rare."**
- "Thinking like a servant is difficult because it challenges the basic problem of my life: I am, by nature, selfish. I think most about me. That's why **humility is a daily struggle, a lesson I must relearn over and over**. The opportunity to be a servant confronts me dozens of times a day, in which **I'm given the choice to decide between meeting my needs or the needs of others**. Self-denial is the core of servanthood."
- **"Servants base their identity in Christ."**
- **"Your identity is in eternity, and your homeland is heaven**. When you grasp this truth, you will stop worrying about 'having it all' on earth."

Relationships

"In our final moments we all realize that relationships are what life is all about. Wisdom is learning that truth sooner rather than later. Don't wait until you're on your deathbed to figure out that nothing matters more."

- **"There is nothing — absolutely nothing — more important than developing a friendship with God."**

- “Four of the Ten Commandments deal with our relationship to God while the other six deal with our relationships with people. But **all ten are about relationships!**“
- “**Community is built not on convenience** (‘we’ll get together when I feel like it’) but on the conviction that I need it for spiritual health. If you want to cultivate real fellowship, it will mean meeting together even when you don’t feel like it, because you believe it is important.”
- “Because **life is all about learning how to love**, God wants us to value relationships and make the effort to maintain them.”

Time

“The importance of things can be measured by how much time we are willing to invest in them. The more time you give to something, the more you reveal its importance and value to you. **If you want to know a person’s priorities, just look at how they use their time.**“

- “**Relationships take time and effort, and the best way to spell love is ‘T-I-M-E.’**“
- “You have to spend time with people — *a lot of time* — to build deep relationships.”
- “**Your time is your life. That is why the greatest gift you can give someone is your time.**“
- “**The best use of life is love. The best expression of love is time. The best time to love is now.**“



Your Life Message

- **"Your testimony:** the story of how you began a relationship with Jesus"
- **"Your life lessons:** the most important lessons God has taught you"
- **"Your godly passions:** the issues God shaped you to care about most"
- **"The Good News:** the message of salvation"
- **"God gives some people a godly passion to champion a cause.** It's often a problem they personally experienced such as abuse, addiction, infertility, depression, a disease, or some other difficulty. Sometimes God gives people a passion to speak up for a group of others who can't speak for themselves: the unborn, the persecuted, the poor, the imprisoned, the mistreated, the disadvantaged, and those who are denied justice. The Bible is filled with commands to defend the defenseless."

Start Taking Action

"It is not enough to keep learning more and more. **We must act on what we know and practice what we claim to believe.** *Impression without expression causes depression.* Study without service leads to spiritual stagnation."

- **"Today the average life span is 25,550 days. (<https://www.sloww.co/recorded-history/>)** That's how long you will live if you are typical. Don't you think it would be a wise use of time to **set aside 40 of those days to figure out what God wants you to do with the rest of them?**"
- **"Begin by assessing your gifts and abilities.** Take a long, honest look at what you are good at and what you're not good at. Paul advised, 'Try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities.' **Make a list.** Ask other people for their candid opinion. Tell them you're searching for the truth, not fishing for a compliment. Spiritual gifts and natural abilities are always confirmed by others."

discover your gifts. Until you're actually involved in serving, you're not going to know what you're good at."

- **"Practicing the presence of God is a skill, a habit you can develop.** Just as musicians practice scales every day in order to play beautiful music with ease, you must force yourself to think about God at different times in your day. **You must train your mind to remember God.**"
- **"The more time you spend reviewing what God has said, the more you will understand the 'secrets' of this life** that most people miss."
- **"Write down the insights and life lessons** God teaches you about him, about yourself, about life, relationships, and everything else. Record these so you can review and remember them and **pass them on to the next generation.**"
- "Forgotten experiences are worthless; that's a good reason to **keep a spiritual journal.**"
- **"Your life is a journey, and a journey deserves a journal."**
- "Extracting the lessons from your experiences takes time. I recommend that you **take an entire weekend for a life review retreat**, where you pause to see how God has worked in the various defining moments of your life and consider how he wants to use those lessons to help others."

them! This probably means you will have to stop doing some other things. There are many ‘good’ things you can do with your life, but God’s purposes are the five essentials you must do. Unfortunately, it’s easy to get distracted and forget what is most important. It’s easy to drift away from what matters most and slowly get off course. To prevent this, you should **develop a purpose statement for your life and then review it regularly.**”

- **“It may take you weeks or months to craft your life purpose statement just the way you want it.** Pray, think about it, talk with close friends, and reflect on Scripture. **You may go through several rewrites before you get to your final form.** Even then, you will probably make minor changes as time goes by and God gives you more insight into your own shape.”
- “In addition to writing a detailed life purpose statement, **it is also helpful to have a shorter statement or slogan that summarizes the five purposes for your life in a way that’s memorable and inspires you.** Then you can remind yourself daily.”
- “I once heard the suggestion that you develop your life purpose statement based on what you would like other people to say about you at your funeral. **Imagine your perfect eulogy** (<https://www.sloww.co/eulogy/>), then build your statement on that. Frankly, that’s a bad plan. **At the end of your life it isn’t going to matter at all what other people say about you. The only thing that will matter is what God says about you.** The Bible says, ‘Our purpose is to please God, not people.’”

What Is a Life Purpose Statement?

- **“It’s a statement that summarizes God’s purposes for your life.** In your own words you affirm your commitment to God’s five purposes for your life. A purpose statement is not a list of goals. Goals are temporary; purposes are eternal.”
- **“It’s a statement that points the direction of your life.** Writing down your purposes on paper will force you to think specifically about the path of your life.

- **"It's a statement that defines 'success' for you.** It states what you believe is important, not what the world says is important. It clarifies your values."
- **"It's a statement that clarifies your roles.** You will have different roles at different stages in life, but your purposes will never change. They are greater than any role you will have."
- **"It's a statement that expresses your shape.** It reflects the unique ways God made you to serve him."

Take your time writing out your life purpose statement:





- "Don't try to complete it in a single sitting, and don't aim for perfection in your first draft; just write down your thoughts as fast as they come to you. It is always easier to edit than to create. **Here are five questions you should consider as you prepare your statement:**"
 - "What will be the **center** of my life? This is the question of *worship*. Who are you going to live for? ...Whatever is at the center of your life is your god."
 - "What will be the **character** of my life? This is the question of *discipleship*. What kind of person will you be? God is far more interested in what you are than what you do. Remember, you will take your character into eternity, but not your career."
 - "What will be the **contribution** of my life? This is the question of *service*."
 - "What will be the **communication** of my life? This is the question of your *mission* to unbelievers."
 - "What will be the **community** of my life? This is the question of *fellowship*."

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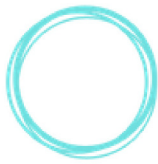
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Comments

IVAYLO DURMONSKI ([HTTPS://DURMONSKI.COM](https://durmonski.com))

good idea about the contents of the book. I'm adding it in my reading list.

REPLY



KYLE KOWALSKI (HTTPS://WWW.SLOWW.CO/)

November 1, 2019 at 9:49 AM (<https://www.sloww.co/purpose-driven-life-book/#comment-521>)

Thank you, Ivaylo. Enjoy the book!

REPLY



rex kahandawela

December 12, 2019 at 5:54 AM (<https://www.sloww.co/purpose-driven-life-book/#comment-588>)

you have spurred many to look for the meaning of life through this summarised version..now they will want to read and adhere to the 40 day program..

to be used of God in this manner is most rewarding for now and eternity. You have inspired many to reach Rick Warren's objective!

REPLY



KYLE KOWALSKI (HTTPS://WWW.SLOWW.CO/)

December 16, 2019 at 11:31 PM (<https://www.sloww.co/purpose-driven-life-book/#comment-608>)

Thanks, Rex! For those seeking a religious path to meaning and purpose, *The Purpose Driven Life* continues to be a great option. I agree that reading the book in full for the 40-day spiritual journey is a great next step after this summary.

REPLY

Danjuma

December 17, 2019 at 7:36 PM (<https://www.sloww.co/purpose-driven-life-book/#comment-629>)

Link to download the book pls

REPLY



KYLE KOWALSKI ([HTTPS://WWW.SLOWW.CO/](https://www.sloww.co/))

January 6, 2020 at 10:13 AM (<https://www.sloww.co/purpose-driven-life-book/#comment-664>)

Thank you, Danjuma. I'm not sure if there's a free download online, but many libraries offer eBooks these days that you could check out for free.

REPLY



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