

THE 7 BIG QUESTIONS DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDE

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Session One: Does Life Have a Purpose?

Social Time

Take ten minutes for the group to get acquainted over snacks and refreshments. Then, after gathering everyone into a comfortable circle, share something like the following Introduction.

Introduction

This Explore God Discussion Group is an opportunity for all of us to consider what we think about lots of spiritual issues. Each week, after a few minutes of social time, we'll gather like this to watch two short films. Then we'll take some time to discuss them, poke holes in them, agree, and disagree. There's nothing for you to prepare each week, and you can participate at whatever level you feel comfortable. That's one great thing about this group—it's a discussion. It's about exploration. I'm not here to convince anyone about anything. I'm on the journey just like you. The reality is that none of us has it all figured out. We all have questions and we can probably learn something from everyone. I would like to ask that each of us be respectful of others' views. We're not here to debate or argue. We're not here to fight. We're not here to bite, kick, scratch, and spit. We're here to foster great conversation around arguably some of the most important questions we all have. Does anyone have any questions about this before we begin?

Video 1: *Pulse of the World on Purpose*

This video is a 2.5-minute survey of many people's responses to this question.

Questions for Discussion

- Did you identify with anyone's expressed views in the film? If so, who and what resonated with you?
- Are you surprised to learn that 85 percent of people are clear about the meaning and purpose of their life (64 percent strongly agree and 21 percent somewhat agree)? Why or why not?

Video 2: *The Curiosity Collective: Does Life Have a Purpose?*

This is a 10-minute collection of subject matter experts discussing the question “Does life have a purpose?” It displays the various questions, struggles, and perspectives of these individuals regarding this week’s topic. See what they have to say and discuss it.

Questions for Discussion

After watching the video, choose from this list of questions or ask some of your own to facilitate discussion. There’s no need to limit your discussion to these questions or to feel pressured to cover all of them in the time you have.

- In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in *The Curiosity Collective*? What did you find intriguing or compelling?
- In the video, Lysa observed, “If I could just discover the right thing, a better job, financial blessing, the right person to love me, the right kids with the right accolades, then I’d feel satisfied.” In what things have you sought satisfaction? Did they satisfy?
- Can you share both a time when life seemed like a random series of events and a time when it seemed like there was an intentional plan unfolding?
- In what ways might someone’s view of eternity affect their sense of meaning and purpose?
- If you believe we all have a purpose, what role does God play in that—if any?

Wrap-Up

Thoughts to Share with the Group

To the best of your ability, summarize the main points of your group’s discussion. Or, if you are more comfortable, use the text below as a launching pad for concluding the session.

When life seems to make little sense, it’s easy to fall prey to the “It’s meaningless!” trap. Indeed, the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes is built around these very words. In stark contrast stands the book of Job, in which the lead character exclaims, “Though [God] slay me, yet I will hope in him” (Job 13:15). In other words, hard experiences in life can jade us to any sense of purpose. Rather than looking at life through the lens of our experience, another option is to look for some sense of truth outside ourselves.

Follow-Up Resources

As you wrap up this session, share or summarize these bullets:

- Acknowledge that with a topic as big as this, there is no way to answer the question comprehensively.
- Inform the group that you’ll be sending some follow-up resources so people can continue to explore God.
- Thank people for joining the discussion, and invite them to stick around if they want to continue the conversation.

Explore More on Purpose

The following resources are designed for deeper exploration of the topics of purpose and the meaning of life. If you are doing this series offline, you can e-mail these resources to your group after the session. Simply copy this section and paste it into an e-mail.

Videos

- How Do You Find Purpose in Life?
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/how-do-you-find-purpose-in-life-video>)
- Laughing with Purpose
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/laughing-with-purpose-video>)

Articles

- What Is the Meaning of Life?
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/what-is-the-meaning-of-life-article>)
- Does Life Have a Purpose?
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/does-life-have-a-purpose>)

Daily Stream of Inspiration

- Developing an Attitude of Gratitude
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/developing-an-attitude-of-gratitude>)

White Paper

- A Deeper Look at What the Bible Says about Meaning and Purpose
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/what-the-bible-says-about-meaning-and-purpose-paper>)

Recommended Books

- *The Life You've Always Wanted*, John Ortberg
(<http://amzn.to/1Owdfnd>)
- *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren
(<http://amzn.to/1dkFD92>)

Additional Content on Purpose

- "Meaning and Purpose," Explore God
(<http://www.exploreGod.com/meaning-and-purpose>)

Scripture Focus

Jesus states in Matthew 7:7, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Discovering our purpose is one of the most important endeavors in life. If what Jesus says is true, then if we simply ask, seek, and knock, God will meet us wherever we are and address our heart's desire.

Based on our group's conversation, how does this thought impact you? If it's true that "each of us has a pretty unique story to play" in the world, what's your role? If you keep a journal, take some time to note your responses there.