

Sacred 4-Letter Words: LIFE

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application
Lynn Haven UMC – April 4, 2021 – Pastor Craig Carter

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It is EASTER and we are celebrating that Christ is risen! Today we are discussing LIFE, a fitting conclusion to our current sermon series on sacred four-letter words that help us live as God intends us to live.

Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”* - John 10:10b NIV

Jesus Christ is saying that there is more to life than just being alive, we all have a God-ordained purpose! Rick Warren’s best-selling book *The Purpose Driven Life* helps us consider the question, *“What on Earth Am I Here For?”* These are five critical questions that enable us to determine the purpose and meaning of life:

1) What will be the CENTER of my life?

Planned for God’s Pleasure through Worship.

Jesus taught that our ultimate purpose is to know and love God through worship. The Bible makes it clear that while a lot of persons and things may vie for our attention, no one or no thing is worthy of our worship other than God. Whoever or whatever occupies center stage in our lives becomes our god. There’s nothing wrong with any of these things, they just do not merit our absolute devotion.

⇒ Here’s an easy test to determine who or what is at the center of your life: What occupies your thoughts? Who or what do you think about the most?

2) What will be the COMMUNITY of my life?

Formed for God’s Family through Fellowship.

Life is all about our relationships, with God and others. The disciples had to be reminded that they were not to live in isolation. We cannot successfully navigate this world on our own, we need community.

⇒ What (or who) is your community? Where do you have a sense of belonging?

3) What will be the CHARACTER of my life?

Created to Become like Christ through Discipleship.

The Bible makes it clear that God is far more interested in who we *are* than what we *do*. Character is always more important than career accomplishments. We were created to become like Christ (Christians = lit., “little Christs”) through discipleship.

⇒ What is your character like? Are you growing in your faith and becoming more like Jesus?

4) What will be the CONTRIBUTION of my life?

Shaped to Serve God through Ministry.

Throughout His time on earth, Jesus taught His followers to “serve and not be served”. Yet they struggled endlessly with selfishness and self-preoccupation. Three times Jesus reminded Peter that to love Him was to “feed His sheep” (John 21:15-17). We each were created with a unique set of characteristics and experiences that enable us to serve others in Jesus’ name.

⇒ What difference is your life making in the lives of others? Who are you choosing to serve? Where is your place of ministry?

5) What will be the COMMUNICATION of my life?

Made for a Mission through Evangelism.

When Jesus said, “*As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you*” (John 20:21) he reminded the disciples that they were not made only to worship and fellowship together, they were also made for a mission. This is the whole reason we do not immediately go to heaven when we become Christians! There is kingdom work here for us to be doing – we are called to share the good news of the gospel and to be a blessing to other people.

⇒ What does your life say to others? What is the message you are communicating?

Conclusion

Real life, abundant life, comes through a relationship with Jesus and the power of His name. First, we must *believe* the good news of Jesus’ life and resurrection (place our faith in Him and trust Him). Secondly, we are to *receive* the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in that we find peace, security, and the power of God to change lives.

The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs ... so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

- John 20:30-31 NLT