



## WEEK 1—WHY IN THE WORLD DO WE EXIST

1. In this study, we will be exploring our purpose for living on this planet. Do you think it is important for a person to have a purpose in life? Why? What do you think happens to people who do not have a significant purpose for living? How does having a significant purpose in life change a person's life?

2. Read Matthew 22:34-40. Why do you think Jesus called this the greatest commandment? What do you think he meant when he said, "all of the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments?" How can a person love God who they cannot see? What do you think it would look like in a person's life if they loved their neighbor as themselves? If we are to put others before ourselves, do you think it is important to love ourselves? Why? Read the following verses and discuss how they relate to loving your neighbor as yourself. Luke 6:27-38.

*Answer—The reason Jesus said that all of the law and prophets hang on these two commandments is that if you love God supremely and love your neighbor as yourself, you will be obeying everything taught in the law and by the prophets. You won't lie, kill others, commit adultery, etc. You love a God you cannot see the same way you love a person you can see—you communicate with them so you get to know them. We should love ourselves because we are created in God's image, we are different from the rest of creation.*

3. The motto for our church is "Love No Matter What". What do you think this means? Do you think it reflects the idea of the Great Commandment? How? Read John 13:35. What did Jesus say would happen if we love no matter what? Why is this important? The love God has for us is expressed by the word "agape" in scripture, which means unconditional love. What does it mean to love unconditionally? Do you think you can love someone this way without liking them? How?

*Answer—Unconditional love is a choice, not a feeling. We can choose to treat people the way God says we should no matter how we feel about them, that is unconditional love.*

4. Read Matthew 28:19,20 which is known as the Great Commission. What is the Great Commission? Pastor Rick said that the Great Commission is not optional for a Christian, what does that mean? Do you agree? What would need to happen in your life for you to carry out

the Great Commission?

*Answer—In order to begin carrying out the Great Commission in our lives, there are a number of things we need to do. 1. First, we need to understand how important it is that we share the gospel with people so that they won't spend eternity in hell. 2. We need to decide that this is something we should do, not rely on a pastor or someone else, that it is my responsibility. 3. We must learn how to do it: Perhaps take the "Life in 6 Words" class the next time it is offered. (Pastor Mark would be glad to come to your group and teach Life in 6 Words). 4. Begin to pray and ask God to give us the courage and the opportunity to begin talking to the people in our lives about Christ.*

5. In the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, Pastor Rick said that there are five things, or purposes, that we are to accomplish while on earth. Read the passages again and see if you can pick out the five things. Matthew 22:36-40 and Matthew 28:19-20. Usually, a person seems to resonate or identify with one purpose more so than the others. Which one appeals to you the most? Why? What could you do to begin/improve your life in this area? A balanced Christian is involved in accomplishing all five areas, how are you doing? Which one is the hardest for you to fulfill? Why?

*Answer—In the Great Commandment, you find: 1. Love the Lord your God—this is the purpose of Worship. 2. Love your neighbor as yourself—this is the purpose of Serving. In the Great Commission you find: 3. Make disciples of all nations—this is the purpose of Evangelism, they must trust Christ before they can be a disciple. 4. Baptizing them.—this is the purpose of Fellowship, incorporating believers into the fellowship of Christians in the church. 5. Make disciples...teaching them to obey—This is the purpose of Discipleship, becoming like Christ. The reason that we tend to gravitate to a specific purpose is two-fold: Firstly, our personality and abilities might facilitate that purpose most and secondly, the spiritual gift we were given when we trusted Christ might fit one purpose more so than another which means that purpose is easier for us to accomplish than the others.*

6. Pastor Rick said that the command to love God with all of your heart, soul, and mind is the definition of what it means to worship God. If this is true, what actions can I do that would be considered worshipping God? Read Colossians 3:17 and 3:23,24. Would you say that these verses are statements of how to worship God? What do you think serving God and others has to do with worshipping God?

**Group Application—**Since these five purposes are what individual believers are to accomplish, it is what the church is to accomplish because the church is the people. Since your small group is actually a "mini-church", your small group should be involved in fulfilling all five. As you go through this series, be thinking of ways in which your group could be involved in activities that fulfill all five of the purposes. Since we do tend to gravitate toward one purpose more than the others, help your group members identify which one appeals most to them and put them in charge of finding ways for your group to fulfill that purpose.