

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE®**

Daily

Discipleship Guide

ADULTS • CSB
FALL 2024

THRIVE: LIVING ON PURPOSE

NAVIGATING FAMILY CONFLICT



RESTORED AND MADE NEW

Home improvement and car restoration. These remain two of the most popular topics for TV shows and YouTube channels. We love to see old houses and cars given “a new lease on life.” Many of us watch these shows to get ideas on what we can do to restore something of our own. And many of us know that to make such a restoration, we’re going to need outside help.

We’re flawed human beings. Because of sin in our lives, we need restoration. We don’t just need a new lease on life, we need a full restoration. However, to be restored to the life and purpose for which God created us requires outside help. None of us are capable of doing this on our own.

Thankfully, God Himself has stepped in to give us the restoration we need. Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, took our sin upon Himself, dying on a cross to remove and forgive our sin. He rose again to give us a new, eternal life.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

This restoration is for you, but it calls for belief and trust. If you would like to have a new life in Christ, repent of your sins and put your faith in Him. Admit to God that you’re a sinner. Turn from the sin that has kept you from God and accept Jesus’s gift of forgiveness. Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Express your repentance and faith by praying something like this:

“Dear God, I know I’m a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I’m sorry for all the wrong I’ve done and ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for forgiveness and new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus’s name I pray, Amen.”

Share your decision to follow Jesus with a pastor or those in your Bible study group. Get involved in a church that will help you grow in your faith. Be baptized as an expression of your faith.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Using the Daily Discipleship Guide	5
<i>Bible Studies for Life</i> Discipleship Plan	6
Study Introductions	8
Prayer Requests	10

SUGGESTED FOR
THE WEEK OF

THRIVE: LIVING ON PURPOSE

SEPTEMBER 1	Session 1	Purpose Questioned	15
SEPTEMBER 8	Session 2	Purpose Abandoned	25
SEPTEMBER 15	Session 3	Purpose Restored	35
SEPTEMBER 22	Session 4	Purpose Lived	45
SEPTEMBER 29	Session 5	Purpose Expressed	55
OCTOBER 6	Session 6	Purpose Exemplified	65

NAVIGATING FAMILY CONFLICT

OCTOBER 13	Session 1	Cain and Abel: Family Responsibility	75
OCTOBER 20	Session 2	Abram and Lot: Family Rights	85
OCTOBER 27	Session 3	Isaac and Rebekah: Family Favorites	95
NOVEMBER 3	Session 4	Jacob and Esau: Family Rivalry	105
NOVEMBER 10	Session 5	Joseph and His Brothers: Family Jealousy	115
NOVEMBER 17	Session 6	Joseph and His Brothers: Family Reconciliation	125

SPECIAL FOCUS

NOVEMBER 24	Session	The God Who Rescues	135
		Coming Next Quarter	146

DON'T MISS THIS!

EBOOK

Bible Studies for Life is also available as an eBook. You can order a copy at lifeway.com/bsflebook.

COMMENTARY

Dig deeper into Scripture with the *Bible Studies for Life: Advanced Bible Study*. This resource features in-depth Bible exposition on the passages studied in this book.

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USING THE DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Your *Daily Discipleship Guide* is full of tools to help you grow as a disciple. But like any tool, you have to use it to get the benefit.

GROUP TIME

This is the content you will study with your group in your weekly gatherings. These pages introduce the Bible passage and unpack its meaning. You'll have opportunities to dig deeper into the content outside your group time.

LIVE IT OUT

This section is designed to answer the question, "Now what?" These ideas will help you apply the study content during the week by giving you something specific and concrete to do. You're encouraged to choose at least one action to pursue further.

TALK IT OUT

Use this section to hold yourself and others accountable by meeting in a smaller group with two to three individuals of the same gender. You'll have an opportunity to discuss the passage, its relevance to your life, and ways you can live it out. This is also a good place to share what God has been teaching you through the group time and your personal, daily Bible study.

DAILY STUDY

These five daily Bible engagement pages are designed to help you dig deeper into God's Word, building on your group study experience. Engage in each daily Bible study, record your thoughts, reflect on the questions, and take action.

Use this resource every week, even when you're unable to attend your group's Bible study. Missing a group meeting doesn't mean you can't still engage daily with God through His Word.



THE PATHWAY OF DISCIPLESHIP

Growing in Christ is a journey—a lifelong journey—but what does that look like? Lifeway’s research reveals eight markers consistently present in the lives of believers who are growing spiritually. Each year, *Bible Studies for Life* engages all eight of these areas. Following this intentional plan for discipleship ensures progress on the pathway to becoming more like Christ.

Visit BibleStudiesforLife.com for a fuller picture of this discipleship plan through 2025.

	FALL 2024	WINTER 2024-25	SPRING 2025	SUMMER 2025
LIVE UNASHAMED	Thrive: Living on Purpose			
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS	Navigating Family Conflict			
SHARE CHRIST		Looking Forward to Christmas		
SEEK GOD		The Heart of Worship		
ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE			All Signs Point to Jesus	
SERVE GOD AND OTHERS			Elisha: Seeing the Hand of God at Work	
OBEY GOD & DENY SELF				Character Counts
EXERCISE FAITH				Risk-Takers: The Adventure of Walking by Faith

THRIVE: LIVING ON PURPOSE

How This Study Supports the Discipleship Plan:

LIVE UNASHAMED. Knowing the purpose God has given us helps us live with confidence. When we are living out God's plan and desire for us, the reaction of the world around us is of little consequence.

Session 1 Purpose Questioned • Ecclesiastes 1:1-14

Session 2 Purpose Abandoned • Psalm 8:1-6; 14:1-7

Session 3 Purpose Restored • Acts 3:14-26

Session 4 Purpose Lived • Galatians 5:16-26

Session 5 Purpose Expressed • Galatians 6:1-10

Session 6 Purpose Exemplified • Philippians 1:1-11

NAVIGATING FAMILY CONFLICT

How This Study Supports the Discipleship Plan:

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS. Among our human relationships, none is more important than the relationships within the family. By considering both positive and negative examples from the book of Genesis, we discover how to build relationships in a positive way that is Christ-honoring.

Session 1 Cain and Abel: Family Responsibility • Genesis 4:1-12

Session 2 Abram and Lot: Family Rights • Genesis 13:5-11,14-18

Session 3 Isaac and Rebekah: Family Favorites • Genesis 25:24-28; 27:5-13

Session 4 Jacob and Esau: Family Rivalry • Genesis 27:35-37,41; 33:1-4,8-11

Session 5 Joseph and His Brothers: Family Jealousy • Genesis 37:1-4,19-24,31-34

Session 6 Joseph and His Brothers: Family Reconciliation • Genesis 42:3-5, 21-24a; 45:1-5

STUDY INTRODUCTIONS

THRIVE: LIVING ON PURPOSE

Why am I here? While this question has always been important, the levels of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness in the world have given it a new sense of urgency. We look around and see people of every background struggling with the same sense of meaninglessness. Though we might try and fill that void through relationships, achievement, or power, the void remains. Like an itch we can't seem to scratch, there lingers in us an idea that we were made for more.

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis wrote: "If I find in myself desires which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." He was right. God created us with purpose, and when we discover that purpose in Christ, life takes on a meaning and richness the world can't offer. We don't need to settle for just living when we can thrive.

Michael Kelley serves as Executive Director of the Rooted Network. He is the author of several books and a frequent speaker at churches and conferences. He and his family live in Brentwood, Tennessee.

NAVIGATING FAMILY CONFLICT

The Old Testament begins with a family tree that branches out into some truly unsightly directions. After the fall, Adam and Eve stumbled out of the exquisite garden into the Wild West of family relationships. From that moment of eviction, Genesis takes us on a road tour of family discord. Conflict lies around every hill and hairpin turn of Genesis. It gets complicated. But when we look under the surface of the stories, ancient though they may be, their relevance is astounding. Things aren't all that different today than they were in this ancient book of cautionary tales. These families faced communication issues, transitions, power struggles, competition, unmet needs, sibling rivalries, rage, and lots of father wounds.

God has a design for family and conflict. Conflict, as painful, awkward, and uncomfortable as it is, has a purpose. Family therapist Helen LaKelly Hunt defines it this way: "Conflict is growth trying to happen." Yes, we're in for a boatload of conflict in these stories, but more importantly, we also find nested in the subtext a Redeemer who is constantly at work, compelling us to embody reconciliation and Christlike love.

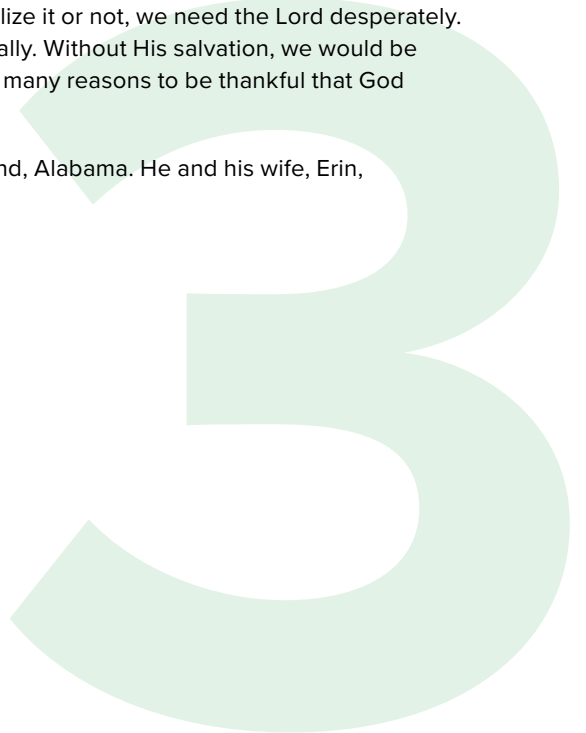
Matt Tullos is a writer and consultant. He lives in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He and his wife, Darlene, have four sons. His most recent book is titled, *Aha, Oh No, and Glory Be*.

THE GOD WHO RESCUES

Our society prizes self-sufficiency. We have self-checkouts, self-service gas stations, self-driving cars, and selfies. YouTube videos help us fix our homes and cars without ever having to rely on a professional repairman. The acronym for such projects easily could describe our entire philosophy of life: DIY (do it yourself).

But God calls us to a different mindset. We must trust Him to rescue us from ruin. Then we must have grateful hearts for His deliverance. Whether we realize it or not, we need the Lord desperately. Without the Lord's provision, we wouldn't survive physically. Without His salvation, we would be doomed spiritually. As we study Psalm 30, we'll discover many reasons to be thankful that God rescues us.

David Roach is pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Saraland, Alabama. He and his wife, Erin, have three children.





We hope you **enjoy** this Bible study experience! :)

ONE



PURPOSE QUESTIONED

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

The first U.S. patent for a treadmill “training machine” was issued in 1913, but that wasn’t the first treadmill. Before then, the machines were used not for exercise but for punishment in prisons. Some today would argue that not much has changed. Whether for exercise or punishment, a treadmill is a machine that requires the expense of energy to go nowhere. Sometimes life feels like that; we put effort into relationships, work, family, and more, and it feels like we’re going nowhere. The first several verses of Ecclesiastes capture this reality well and sum it up in one word: futility.

THE POINT

Apart from God, life is _____.

Solomon is regarded as the wisest person to have ever lived. He was wealthy beyond imagination. He was powerful and influential throughout the known world. He had the means to pursue any desire to the fullest extent. And yet despite it all, he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, a text which we might find to be difficult if not depressing. Solomon, despite all his resources, reflected on the meaningless nature of virtually all of life.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-7 ¹ **The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem.** ² **“Absolute futility,” says the Teacher. “Absolute futility. Everything is futile.”** ³ **What does a person gain for all his efforts that he labors at under the sun?** ⁴ **A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.** ⁵ **The sun rises and the sun sets; panting, it hurries back to the place where it rises.** ⁶ **Gusting to the south, turning to the north, turning, turning, goes the wind, and the wind returns in its cycles.** ⁷ **All the streams flow to the sea, yet the sea is never full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.**

1) Without God, what we do in life can feel _____.

“Futility” (v. 2). That’s the word Solomon used to describe all of life. Like the proverbial treadmill, the impression we get from the “Teacher” (v. 1) is that life is an endless series of efforts, labors, and tasks that have no meaningful result. To underscore his point, Solomon described the cyclical nature of days and nights, the seasons of the year, and even the weather patterns. For him, life is like all those things—it comes and goes, then comes and goes again.

Ecclesiastes 1:8-10 ⁸ **All things are wearisome, more than anyone can say. The eye is not satisfied by seeing or the ear**

filled with hearing.⁹ **What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun.**¹⁰ **Can one say about anything, “Look, this is new”? It has already existed in the ages before us.**

2) Without God, what we do in life does not _____.

Not only is life pointless, but it also doesn't satisfy, and Solomon should know. Given his great resources, he was able to chase any of his pursuits to their end. Whether education, food and drink, or sexual gratification, Solomon found that his thirst couldn't be quenched; his hunger wouldn't go away.

The result is a constant sense of disappointment. What promises to be new and exciting is really just a warmed-over version of something else. What promises to be fulfilling inevitably falls short.

Ecclesiastes 1:11-14¹¹ **There is no remembrance of those who came before; and of those who will come after there will also be no remembrance by those who follow them.**¹² **I, the Teacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.**¹³ **I applied my mind to examine and explore through wisdom all that is done under heaven. God has given people this miserable task to keep them occupied.**¹⁴ **I have seen all the things that are done under the sun and have found everything to be futile, a pursuit of the wind.**

3) Without God, what we do in life is a _____ task.

It wasn't that Solomon wasn't looking for meaning; he certainly was, and yet he found all of life devoid of it. It's no wonder he came to the conclusion that life isn't satisfying. At best, we find ourselves at a pace of busyness, so we don't have to think about those desires inside of us. We're certainly not purpose-filled people; we're only occupied by our tasks.

We all feel the disappointment. But the disappointment isn't the end. In fact, it's necessary for us to deeply feel the disappointment of life so that we might look beyond these pursuits to the source of real life and satisfaction.

ENGAGE

Life can sometimes be difficult, but God is always there to help us process and learn. What's one thing that has you asking, "What's the purpose?" Write your response in the margin and spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you see *His* purpose.

LIVE IT OUT

What actions will you take in response to today's study?

- **Give thanks.** Memorize Ephesians 2:10 and thank God that He made you for a purpose.
- **Evaluate.** Consider the areas of your life where you're frustrated and lacking purpose. Ask God to help you look at these situations through a new lens—His lens.
- **Reflect.** Take twenty minutes and write an answer to the following question: "Where do I find meaning in life?"

TALK IT OUT

Want to go a step further? Gather with two or three Christ-followers of the same gender. Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-14, then use the following summary and questions for a deeper discussion.

In many ways, the story of Solomon is tragically ironic. Though he received tremendous wisdom from the Lord, he still found ways in his life and habits to depart from it. Those departures were at least part of why he regarded life as futile. Any pursuit apart from God is futile. And pursuing anything apart from God will never lead to a life of meaning and purpose.

Inevitably, we'll all come to the same conclusion if we're seeking anything other than Jesus. We must, on a daily basis, examine our priorities and passions to make sure they're rightly fueled with the joy of the Lord. It's only then that we'll lead lives that truly matter, both to us and to the rest of the world.

- ? **Why do you think so many people feel unsatisfied, no matter how much they accomplish?**
- ◎ **Do a word study on *futility*. Use the study tools at biblestudytools.com and discuss what you learn.**
- ? **How can disappointment be a key part of God's redemptive work in your life? Share a story of when you've seen this to be true.**

DAY 1: Disappointment is an opportunity to look elsewhere.

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-3.

Ecclesiastes is a book in which Solomon systematically examined every part of life under the sun. He held up pleasure, work, time, knowledge, and even wisdom itself, and with each one, found it wanting. That’s the recurrent refrain throughout the book after each aspect of life is examined—futility! Every time.

Every component of life was obliterated. Destroyed. Crushed under the weight of expectations. With each aspect, the “Teacher” (v. 1) found that it couldn’t provide the kind of satisfaction we desire. And with each one, we find ourselves eventually and inevitably disappointed. Work never truly satisfies. Pleasure is never enough. Knowledge is never fulfilling.

That’s the bad news of Ecclesiastes. Whenever we look to anything under the sun for fulfillment and satisfaction, we’ll eventually cry, “Futility!” as it’s crushed. But that’s also the good news of Ecclesiastes. This is more than just disappointment—it’s disappointment by design.

God has made these things in such a way that they will crumble. And with every crumbling, we’re reminded of the vanity of everything under the sun when we put too much weight on it. And as we’re reminded, we have to refocus our expectations on something that won’t crumble under that weight.

Unfortunately, this isn’t a lesson we learn only once; it’s one we need to be reminded of again and again. We constantly look to the things under the sun to do what they were never meant to do. We put weight on these things that they were never meant to carry. But each time they crumble and each time we’re disappointed, that disappointment is an opportunity to look elsewhere.

? Underline Mark 8:36 in your Bible. How does this passage parallel Ecclesiastes 1:1-3? Write your thoughts below.

“
What does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life?
”

Mark 8:36

DAY 2: We can choose to live faithfully the life God has given us.

Read Ecclesiastes 1:4-7.

There's a natural rhythm to God's created order, on which Solomon reflected. The sun rises and sets with regularity. The wind blows in different directions and at different speeds depending on the time of year. The days, months, and eventually years pass by, and with them so also pass generation after generation of people. You might say that the people are the most variable component of all. Our little lives, which might last seventy or eighty years, are just a blip on the radar of God's created order. We're here one minute and gone the next.

When seen against the backdrop of the rest of creation, our lives are short. A vapor, in fact. This, too, is a cause for the feeling of futility—what is one life worth in the midst of the huge circle of life? If we're not careful, such a reflection can send us to one of two extremes:

- **Laziness.** We believe that because life is so short and the world keeps spinning around, what we do with this life doesn't matter at all. We can't possibly hope to make a difference, experience joy, or seek to steward our time well, so we don't do anything at all with our lives.
- **Panic.** We think that because life is so short and the world keeps spinning, every day must be the best day. We have to live at a dizzying pace, making sure there are no moments wasted because, after all, we don't know which moment will be our last.

Between those two ditches is the road of faithfulness. It's a life that recognizes both its brevity and opportunity. We can choose to live faithfully the life God has given us in the time He has given us for as long as He has given it to us.

- 🕒 **Have coffee with a trusted Christian mentor and talk about how you can be certain that it's God and not you directing your life.**

*Growing up,
what was the greatest cause of conflict in your family?
Share your experience!*



DAY 3: Maybe the problem isn't with things that are old or things that are new.

Read Ecclesiastes 1:8-10.

We live in a day and time that is fascinated with the new. We crave innovation; we long for further development; we desire the fresh; we worship at the idol of the new. The problem is, according to Solomon, there's really nothing new under the sun.

But is that true? When we look around the world of technology, surely we've seen the opposite of that statement. We have devices in our pockets that can do things that would have been unfathomable for previous generations. How can it be that there's nothing new?

Granted, especially from a technology standpoint, there are "new" things happening all the time—new devices, new platforms, new ways to transmit information. But ironically, each one of these new things brings with it the same old pitfalls. They promise us happiness and connection and fulfillment, and yet, once again, we find ourselves disappointed when the "new" that they promise never truly delivers on what our hearts desire. In this way, there's nothing really new, because every new innovation carries with it the same sense of disappointment.

We should be wary, then, of looking to the future as some kind of utopia when the same old problems we face daily will be solved. They won't. We'll experience the same pain, the same frustration, and the same sense of loss with the "new" that we have with the "old." Though the new might tickle the senses of sight and sound, the new can't truly reach the heart. That's where the real struggle lies, and that's where we should be paying the most attention.

Rather than believing the false promise that the "new" will finally bring us the fulfillment we so long for, we should look inwardly and acknowledge the fact that perhaps the problem isn't with things that are old or things that are new—maybe the real problem is deep within ourselves.

- 🕒 **Spend some extended time in prayer today, sitting with the Lord and asking Him to reveal where you've been looking for fulfillment in the "new," expecting it to bring satisfaction that can only be found in Him.**

DAY 4: We were made for so much more.**Read Ecclesiastes 1:11-14.**

Solomon had quite a resume. He was king over Jerusalem; he had a keen mind, adventurous nature, and abundant resources. He had every opportunity to finally find that which truly satisfies, and he did his best. We're reminded several times throughout Scripture of Solomon's great wealth, his great appetite for pleasure, and his great power and influence. But despite all his pursuits, he couldn't escape the feeling of futility. In a vivid metaphor, Solomon wrote that the pursuit of these things was like the pursuit of the wind. Pursuits like this are:

- **Untraceable.** Just as we can't determine the ending point of the wind, so also is the pursuit of those things that will never truly satisfy. There's no end, no matter how much effort or how many resources we expend.
- **Uncatchable.** In our pursuit of the things of this world, we might gain a measure of power, prestige, or pleasure, but even then, we'll find ourselves wanting more.
- **Unsustainable.** The pursuit of these meaningless things, in the end, will leave us exhausted. We'll find ourselves at the end of our ropes, just as Solomon did, with nothing but failure to show for the great amount of time and energy we've invested.

There are, then, only two real conclusions we can come to in light of these failed pursuits. First, God is cruel, and He has demonstrated that cruelty by giving us a miserable, exhausting, and unfulfilling way to live. Or, second, we were made for something different—something more—than seeking after the next thing.

When we turn to the New Testament, we find great clarity on what we should be pursuing: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you" (Matthew 6:33).

- ? Spend some time reflecting today. What have you been pursuing? How does that differ from what you should be pursuing?**

DAY 5: God provides what we need.

Read Isaiah 55:1-2.

In a sense, our lives are a constant rhythm of depletion and renewal. This rhythm happens over and over again.

- We deplete our reserves of calories, and we feel hungry. We're renewed when we eat. And then we do it again.
- We deplete our reserves of energy, and we feel tired. We're renewed when we sleep. And then we do it again.
- We deplete our reserves of hydration, and we feel thirsty. We're renewed when we drink. And then we do it again.

These rhythms are so natural to us, so often repeated, that we don't even think about them anymore. We simply respond when we sense the depletion and then experience the renewal. When it comes to our souls, though, the process is less natural. It takes more conscious thought and intentional choice because of our propensity to try and deal with the depletion we're experiencing using lesser means of renewal.

Imagine for a moment your daily rhythm. You've been working all morning, busy with meetings, agenda items, and to-do lists. You've been concentrating hard, and that concentration is interrupted by an embarrassingly loud grumble from your belly. You've clearly depleted your reserves and need renewal. But instead of eating a sandwich, you lay down and try to take a nap.

This is like what we often do in our spiritual lives. We feel some deep need, some depletion—joy, gratitude, contentment, peace, whatever—and instead of recognizing that depletion for what it is, we misunderstand what we're truly feeling and look to some false or lesser means of renewal. We take a nap when we should be eating a sandwich.

Into that dynamic comes the invitation from God. It's an invitation to all who have come to the end of their rope, who are depleted, who need renewal, who are disappointed. When we find ourselves in need of renewal because, once again, we've been disappointed by the things of the world, we can accept His invitation and provision.

- 🕒 **Write John 6:35 on a notecard or sticky note and place it where you will see it often as a reminder of God's provision when you feel depleted.**