

THE GOOD LIFE

Lessons from Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life*

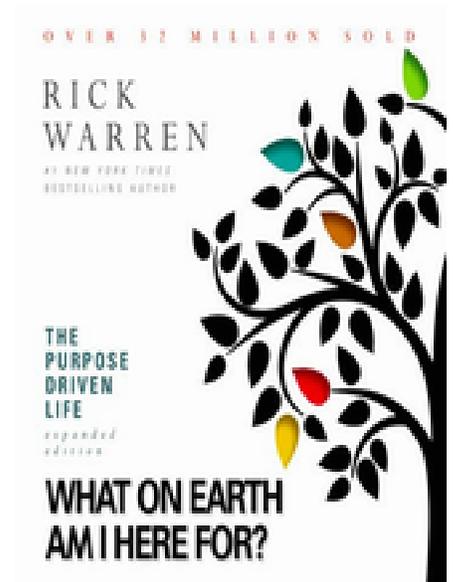
WHY THIS BOOK?

- One of the all-time top-selling advice books: **30mm copies since 2007!**
- Rick Warren is an evangelical Christian pastor; I'm fascinated by the growth of televangelism and influence of pastors like him, Billy Graham, Joel Osteen
- It was recommended by several Christian friends and seemed like a quick read

WHO'S THE AUTHOR?



Rick Warren is an American evangelical Christian pastor and the founder of Saddleback Church, the [8th largest](#) in the U.S. You may remember him hosting a "Civil Forum" with Obama and McCain during the 2008 election. He later gave the opening prayer at Obama's inauguration ceremony.



WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

You are unhappy and unfulfilled. Why? **Because you have no PURPOSE in life.** Your life and your work lack meaning and it depresses you. Warren says you must believe these assumptions:

1. Life is a test

Character is both developed and revealed by tests, and all of life is a test. You are always being tested. God constantly watches your response to people, problems, success, conflict, illness, disappointment, and even the weather!

2. Life is a trust

Our time, energy, intelligence, opportunities, relationships, and resources are all gifts that God has entrusted to our care and management. We are stewards, or managers, of whatever God gives us.

3. Life is a temporary assignment

In a similar vein, Buddhists say attachment, craving, and desire are the sources of suffering.

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.

To become happy and fulfilled, stop thinking about your self. Life is not about you - it's about serving God and by extension, mankind. God has made you for a purpose (five, in fact):

1. **Worship** (attend church, praise him, honor him by being healthy and productive)
2. **Fellowship** (forgive others, strengthen family, connect with Christian friends)
3. **Discipleship** (pray regularly, avoid addictive and bad habits, donate to the Church)
4. **Ministry** (serve your Church, participate in and lead discussion groups)

5. **Evangelism** (pray for nonreligious friends, invest in the spiritual lives of others)

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT LESSONS?

First, I'm not Christian, and I don't believe everything Warren says; for Christian messages that he shares, I've re-interpreted them for a general audience (although with excerpts *in italics*). Second, my goal is to derive practical advice on how to live a good life, one that helps me (and hopefully you) develop purpose, meaning, and fulfillment (especially in my career and relationships).

Lesson #1: Serve others

Jesus Christ once said, "Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self."

QUESTION: How are you serving and helping others, whether friends, family, or strangers?

Lesson #2: Appreciate the majesty of the Universe

Where is the glory of God? Just look around. Everything created by God reflects his glory in some way. We see it everywhere, from the most microscopic form of life to the vast Milky Way, from sunsets and stars to storms and seasons.

Related fun quote by Richard Dawkins:

An awful lot of people who call themselves religious simply don't know there's any alternative. If you probe what they believe, it turns out to be pretty much the same—we all have a sense of wonder and reverence at the majesty of the universe.

QUESTION: When was the last time you took the time to appreciate the world around you? How did it make you feel?

Lesson #3: Meaning and purpose are critical to living a fulfilled life

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 meaning, nothing is bearable.

QUESTION: What ways have you tried to discover your life's purpose?

Lesson #4: Do less and stop being so distracted!

Henry David Thoreau observed that people live lives of "quiet desperation," but today a better description is aimless distraction...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.

Related fun quote by Donald Rumsfeld:

When you initiate new activities, find things you are currently doing that you can discontinue — whether reports, activities, etc. It works, but you must force yourself to do it. Always keep in mind your teeth-to-tail ratio.

QUESTION: Which activities can you reduce/eliminate to better focus on the stuff that matters?

Lesson #5: Money and possessions are temporary things and will not make you happy

Possessions only provide temporary happiness. Because things do not change, we eventually become bored with them and then want a newer, bigger, better version.

QUESTION: If you believed that everything you “own” is really on loan, how would that change the way you feel about your possessions?

Lesson #6: Think long-term and focus on the future

When you live in light of eternity, your values change. You use your time and money more wisely. You place a higher premium on relationships and character instead of fame or wealth or achievements or even fun... The most damaging aspect of contemporary living is short-term thinking. To make the most of your life, you must keep the vision of eternity continually in your mind and the value of it in your heart.

QUESTION: What are you doing right now to prepare for eternity?

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

- When something shitty happens, view it as a test of my character and skills
- See possessions (eg, my Macbook Air) as fleeting and borrowed. Own less stuff
- In my career, focus on projects that tangibly improve peoples' lives
- Take time to appreciate Mother Nature and the Universe. Try [Nature Meditation](#)
- Reduce distracting shit. Check email and social media only once a day
- When starting new commitments, be prepared to invest AT LEAST [5-years](#). Or 10

RELATED AND INSPIRING CONTENT

- Purpose-Driven Life Health Assessment [[download](#)] – grade yourself on the 5 purposes
- Sample Life Purpose Statements [[download](#)] – see how Warren sets his own life goals
- Creating Your Vision, by Steve Pavlina ([link](#)). Snippet: *Keep tweaking your vision as you feel the need to do so. Keep renewing it once or twice per day. Feel the feelings of being there. Eventually you'll create a vision that feels so good that you'll find it immensely pleasurable to just sit back and imagine it as real.*
- The Heart Grows Smarter, by David Brooks ([link](#)). Snippet: *The men who grew up in homes with warm parents were much more likely to become first lieutenants and majors in World War II. The men who grew up in cold, barren homes were much more likely to finish the war as privates.*
- The Puzzle, by Chris Michel ([link](#)). Snippet: *We travel for many reasons – entertainment, growth, comfort, appreciation, ego, and, probably, some of each in different amounts at different times. I like to think that I travel to grow – ideally, uncovering some remaining piece of information that will help me be a better person.*