

FINDING MEANING,
PURPOSE AND SATISFACTION
in Life

Study Guide

FCCI

Excellence in Business Leadership

What is your life purpose? How do you define “success”? These important questions and more were artfully presented by Verla Gillmor Wallace at the 2003 FCCI International Conference in Bachelor Gulch, CO, USA. She begins by asking and answering, “Four Questions that Change Everything,” concluding these first two sessions with a call to total surrender to God. The final two sessions challenge the world’s definition of success and contrast it to God’s definition. Expect delightful stories and anecdotes to anchor these important lessons.

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As a broadcast journalist, [Verla Gillmor Wallace](#) spent 14 years as an award-winning news anchor, reporter, talk show host and documentary producer at Chicago radio affiliates of CBS, NBC, RKO and Mutual Broadcasting.

Since 1988 she has been a public relations executive specializing in public relations strategic counsel, corporate positioning, spokesperson training and business writing.

Verla has written for the Chicago Tribune, Christianity Today, Today’s Christian Woman, Business Reform Magazine, Citizen Magazine, and is also author of Reality Check, A Survival Manual for Christians in the Workplace. She is featured in the book, What’s Next? Women Redefining Their Dreams in the Prime of Life and is listed in the 25th anniversary edition of “Who’s Who in the Midwest.”

Verla is married, has one adult daughter and lives in Madison, Wisconsin.



In pursuit of Christ’s eternal objectives, we equip and encourage Christian business leaders to operate their businesses and conduct their personal lives according to Biblical principles.

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FOUR QUESTIONS THAT CHANGE EVERYTHING - PART 1

Hebrews 12:1 Ecclesiastes 2:22-23 Ecclesiastes 3:13

Overview: When answers to life's questions elude us—especially questions about life purpose- maybe we are asking the wrong questions.

Question #1: What's the point of my life?

Ways we typically measure success:

- Recognition, influence
- Power, authority
- Wealth
- Accomplishment

INSIGHT

Your roles are not your life purpose. God has a life for you that is bigger than any job or role.

God can use these things, but they are not the main point.

Question Worth Pondering: What is your race?

Worth a closer look: King Solomon's search for purpose (Background for later study: 1 Kings 4:21-34, Ecclesiastes 2:22-23)

If true success doesn't come in the way we thought it did, then we must ask another question.

Question #2: What does God want?

- God calibrated your soul for eternity.
- Your greatest satisfaction will come by living from a kingdom perspective.

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In order to live from a kingdom perspective, we have to ask a third question.

Question #3: Who am I?

INSIGHT

"Meaning and purpose don't come from what you do, but from who you are and how you live."

--Dallas Willard

To understand your purpose, you have to know who you are.

Our culture says that what we "do" defines who we "are." God disagrees.

Question Worth Pondering: Are you living the life God wants to live in you?

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PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Under the question, "What is the point of your one and only life?", review the ways we typically measure success. Which of these apply to you? _____

What others would you add? _____

2. If you were asked to tell someone who you are without describing your roles (i.e. parent, spouse, business owner, athlete, Bible study leader) or your title or accomplishments, what would you say? _____
What does this tell you about yourself? _____

3. Do you believe God really knows what you need in order to be happy? _____
Do you believe He genuinely cares about your happiness or just about getting you to do His bidding? _____
Describe a time when you believed He cared...or didn't care. _____

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Ephesians 2:8-10

FOUR QUESTIONS THAT CHANGE EVERYTHING - PART 2

Overview: The largest obstacle to God's blessings in your life is you.

Recap of Core Questions from Session One:

Question #1: What is the point of my one and only life?

Question #2: What does God want?

Question #3: Who am I?

The Leader's Dilemma:

- Does God really understand me?
- God seems to value traits that are the polar opposite to what makes me a strong leader!

What Leaders Value	What God Values in Leaders
Risk	Dependence on Him
Speed (a "get it done" mentality)	Abiding, listening, investing time in our relationship with Him
Independence, Control	Trusting Him instead of our plans
Competing, winning	Obedience, serving an "audience of One"

Worth a Closer Look:

The Apostle Paul was a risk-taker who learned it paid to completely depend on God.

(Acts 14:1-7, Acts 18:9-11, Acts 20:22-24)



Job learned the hard way that God knew what He was doing and could handle Job's needs.

(Job 38 and 39, 41:11, 42:2)

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INSIGHT

"If you're going down the wrong road it will never become the right road. You have to stop, get a new map and begin again."

--C. S. Lewis

- Leaders don't wait. They make other people wait.
- Leaders don't want to be "in process." They want a clear-cut task and deadline.
- Leaders don't want to report to someone else. They want to be the boss!
- Leaders don't want to depend on God. How will God know how valuable they are to the kingdom?



Question #4: Now what?

Now that you know God has written eternity on your heart and wants you to live from a Kingdom perspective, what are you going to do about it?

Who is going to chart your future?

- The culture
- Your peers
- Your family
- Your own unchecked passions and drives

If you're not willing to do what it takes to align yourself with God's values and agenda, you'll never find the satisfaction and significance you are working so hard to obtain.

HOW BADLY DO YOU WANT IT?

God's delivery system for meaning and purpose in life is...

SURRENDER!

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PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Our speaker shared that there was a time she viewed her times with God as basically a "performance review" of her activities on His behalf. Honestly share your thoughts about this. Is it what you believe? _____

What does your life reflect? _____

2. What do you believe is the most important criteria for your success in God's eyes? _____

What would need to change in your thoughts and actions to more fully align your life with His criteria? _____

3. What do you feel is the current level of your "surrender" to God? _____

What factors in your lifestyle show this? _____

Are certain areas of your life "off limits" to God? _____

What adjustments are you ready to make to more fully surrender to Him? _____

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CHALLENGING THE WORLD'S SUCCESS PRINCIPLES - PART 1

The World's Definition of Success:

If you have money, the whole world opens up to you. You have options. Success and money go hand-in-hand.



Are you chained to success?

Challenging the World's View of Success

The World's Success Principle #1: The sky's the limit!

- *The Hidden Message:*
Limits are bad. You dare not set boundaries.
- *The Truth:*
You can't do it all!
The entire universe runs on the principle of limits.

INSIGHT

God will hold you accountable for what you were SUPPOSED to do but DIDN'T do...because you took on things He NEVER ASKED you to do.

God's Success Principle #1: Focus!

- Learn what you are here to do.
- Let your life purpose guide your choices.
- "Focus" keeps you from continually being at the mercy of outside pressures.

INSIGHT

God is not free to work in our lives until we give up instructing Him about what our lives have to "look like" in order for us to be happy.

The World's Success Principle #2: Control Your Own Destiny!

- *The Hidden Message:*
Control is possible and even necessary for our happiness.
- *The Truth:*
You can't make life behave.
Control doesn't guarantee a heartache-free life.

God's Success Principle #2 : Transfer Control to God.

- He wants to be chief executive of our life, not just a consultant!

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Think about any "success seminars" you've attended (secular or Christian). What was the topic? _____
What short-term emotional response did you have to the seminar? _____
Did it result in any lasting life change? _____ If so, what was it? _____
_____ If not, why do you think it didn't last? _____

2. On average, how many hours a week do you spend "on the job?" (this includes time spent at your workplace as well as time spent on the road or at home talking about work or addressing work-related issues?) _____ Do you feel it's too many, too few or just the right amount of hours? _____ Why? _____

3. Can you relate to the speaker's discussion about controlling your own destiny? _____
Describe experiences you've had trying to control your destiny. What was the result? _____

What would you do differently if you had a second chance? _____

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CHALLENGING THE WORLD'S SUCCESS PRINCIPLES - PART 2

The World's Success Principle #3: You Can Make it Happen!

- **The Hidden Message:**
You are the center of the universe.
You are the source of your success.
- **The Truth:**
It's not about you!

God's Success Principle #3: God makes it happen!

- Our job is to work hard and steward our gifts. But, the fruit and the outcome are up to God.
- If we insist on having our own way and taking the credit for our success, God may allow us to feel the consequences and lead us into a wilderness season.

Questions Worth Pondering:

- Where does it hurt in your life?
- Is God trying to get your attention?

INSIGHT

God highly values humility and obedience.

The "Beautiful Lie": God doesn't understand my situation.

The most dangerous word to use with God: BUT...

- "God, this situation is different..."
- "How can my business survive if I do that?"
- "I have another suggestion..."



Worth a Closer Look: I Samuel 15:20, 22
Read about Saul's decision to do it his way, not following God's instructions.

The road to genuine success: **SURRENDER!**

INSIGHT

God doesn't promise to always make our dreams come true because our dreams are too small. Instead, He invites us to help fulfill His dreams.

Q: Where is your place in this world?

A: As close as you can get to your Heavenly Father.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Think about your childhood. Were you raised to believe you could accomplish anything you put your mind to, or raised to believe you wouldn't achieve much? _____

- What effect has that had on your career? _____

2. Does it bother you to hear that everything you have—your gifts, talent, net worth, success—begins and ends with God? _____
Do you believe that? _____
What part is the most difficult to accept? _____
Obviously, it doesn't mean we are to "coast" through life; what is your part? _____

3. Where in your life right now do you feel like giving God a "But, God" excuse? _____

- Is it legitimate? _____
- Ask your group for input. What is your greatest fear about surrendering 100% to God? _____

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Application & Commitment

James 1:22-25 "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-- he will be blessed in what he does." (NIV)

Series: **"Finding Meaning, Purpose and Satisfaction in Life"**

Date Series Began: _____

Date Series Ended: _____

Participant's Name: _____

One of the Biblical Truths (Principles) I learned from these lessons was: _____

I intend to apply this Truth (Principle) in my business by: _____

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will begin applying this Truth immediately. I ask and expect my group to hold me accountable for this and to check with me periodically to determine if I am doing so. Please ask me: _____

Signature

Date



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