

Thank you for downloading one of the eight, five-session small group studies from *The Pursuit*.

The Pursuit is a 40-week, video-driven small group study for men. Each session features a video from best-selling author, Rick Burgess, and a small group leader guide. You can purchase all 40 weeks, or purchase the eight, five-week sessions independently.

If we can help answer any questions about *The Pursuit* or any other of the Iron Hill Men resources, please don't hesitate to email (customer care@ironhillpress.com) or call (800) 307-9366



PURPOSE

A 5-WEEK, VIDEO-DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP
CURRICULUM FOR MEN

BY RICK BURGESS

**PURPOSE: A 5-WEEK, VIDEO-DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP
CURRICULUM FOR MEN**

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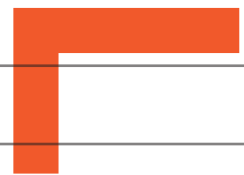
LUKE
9:23
THE MAN CHURCH
BE A MAN...FOLLOW JESUS

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DISCIPLESHIP CULTURE COURTSHIP TITHING OZON INTERDISCIPLINARY

DISCIPLE MEN, CHANGE EVERYTHING.

There is a discipleship problem affecting Christian men today. Too often, men are absent from both the church pews and from the vital work the church is doing in the world. These men are not engaged spiritually in their homes and aren't making a Kingdom impact in their workplace. And it all points back to one major issue:

Many men aren't being discipled.

But when men ARE being discipled, powerful things happen as a result. They impact the church, their family, and culture. We have seen the influence godly men can have. The purpose of *The Pursuit* curriculum is to equip and empower men to become the man God has called them to be.

WHAT IS THE PURSUIT?

The Pursuit is a 40-week, video-driven curriculum designed to help men live out a masculinity that is found in the person and example of Jesus. *The Pursuit* takes eight core characteristics that Jesus embodied and fleshes each one of them out through video and small group Bible Study.

Rick Burgess, best-selling author and co-host of the nationally syndicated radio show *The Rick & Bubba Show*, starts off each session with a 10-15 minute video introducing the session's focus. Then, for each small group session, there is a leader guide to help facilitate a meaningful time of discussion and Bible study.

The reason men aren't living a more authentic faith is simple: they have yet to embrace the call to real discipleship. By leading a group through *The Pursuit*, you're a part of the growing tide of men who are looking to awaken men to embrace their calling as Christ-followers.

STARTER GUIDE

So many men struggle with who they are and what they are doing. Men have wrestled with this question for ages. We want to know that what we're spending our lives on truly matters.

The good news is that the Bible is crystal clear about our purpose. The question we have to ask ourselves is: what does this look like as men to pursue the purpose Christ has called us to? Answer that, and we answer whether or not what we're doing matters.

The five sessions in *Purpose* will help you and the men in your group define what your purpose is as a man, and will challenge you to live it out. You'll find that the difficult thing isn't knowing what our purpose is as godly men. It's having the willingness to live it out.

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

FIRST, preview your video. Every *Pursuit* session starts with a video. You'll need to preview your video ahead of time and be prepared to show it to your group. You can access your videos through your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, get ready for your small group discussion and Bible study by preparing your lesson. Use this leader guide to help lead a time of discussion based on the video and Bible study based on the passage Rick covered. Pray that God would lead your preparation and your facilitation of the material.

FINALLY, lead your time of small group Bible study using this leader guide. It's that simple.

If you have any questions or feedback, don't hesitate to let us hear from you at feedback@ironhillpress.com.

- **Main Passage:** 1 Chronicles 16:28-29
- **Purpose:** To lay the foundation for an understanding of our purpose as men.
- **Session Snapshot:** The search for purpose is a universal question all people ask. Men, in particular, seem to be driven by a search for purpose, often in the wrong places. But Scripture is clear about our purpose. It defines our purpose boldly and unequivocally. Our purpose as men is to glorify God with our lives. This session will help clarify this and unpack what this practically looks like in their lives.

GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together by introducing a new theme or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, explain to your group that they will be beginning a video series on purpose that is part of a larger study on what it means to pursue a masculinity that is centered in Christ. Say something like:

- **The desire for a life of meaning and purpose is inborn in all people. Even if they don't realize it. As men who are striving to live our lives as authentic Christ-followers, it's vital that we know our purpose. More than that, it's critical that we understand HOW to define our purpose. Over the next five sessions, we'll learn what it looks like to seek our purpose in God and how we can boldly live it out in our daily lives.**

If this is your first session as a group, consider introducing yourself, if necessary, and having the men in your group introduce themselves. Then, ask for volunteers to share what they want to get out of their time in this study. If you want to pass around a contact sheet or do any other first-session "housekeeping tasks," this is the time to do it.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, as this is the first session, explain to the group the basic structure of your time together. Explain that you will watch a video that is usually about 15 minutes long, followed by a short discussion of the video. Then, you'll spend a few minutes in Bible study, followed by a closing activity. Consider encouraging men to take notes as they watch the video.

THEN, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

When the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **Rick says out of the gate that the question, "What is my purpose?" is one of the most profound questions a man can ask. Why do you think this is the case? Go beyond a surface answer. WHY are we so driven by this question?**
- **Is it fair to say that many of the issues men have stem from their search for purpose?**
- **If we listed things men look to for their purpose apart from God, what would be on that list?**
- **Answer this question honestly without beating yourself up: If someone were to observe your actions, your attitude, and how you spent your time, what would that say that you worship? Where would God fall on that list?**
- **We'll get to this in our Bible study, but how do you define what it means to "bring**

glory to God"? (Maybe consider listing responses on a whiteboard if you have one.)

- **What does Rick say is the relationship between truly knowing Jesus and living a life that glorifies Him? (Hint: This was when Rick was referencing Matthew 10:32-33.)**
- **Here's an interesting thought: We can't add or take away from God's glory. His glory is His because of who He is. Our glorifying Him doesn't change anything about who He is. So why do you believe it's so vital for our purpose that our lives would be lived to glorify God?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **We're going to spend the next four weeks looking at our purpose from a variety of different angles. But for this session, we're going to lay the foundation for how we think about our purpose by making sure we're on the same page about what it means to glorify God with our lives.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at 1 Chronicles 16:28-29. As Rick stated in the video, this passage unpacks the foundation of our purpose as godly men.

While your people are finding 1 Chronicles 16, remind them that it's important to have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Consider providing the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** We don't know for sure who the writer of 1 Chronicles is. Scholars point toward Ezra, who lived in the latter half of fifth century BC. However, some assert that Nehemiah was an author.
- **Time frame:** Both 1 and 2 Chronicles have traditionally been hard to date. We know they were written after the exile from the Babylonians, around 1000 BC. They were likely written in mid 400 BC.
- **Purpose:** 1 Chronicles has traditionally been seen as a sort of supplement or companion to the books of Samuel and Kings. The overarching purpose is to highlight the covenant God had with David and show how this covenant is central to understanding God, His people, and His plan of redemption (ultimately fulfilled in Christ).

THEN, read or have a volunteer read 1 Chronicles 16:28-29. When the volunteer has finished, explain that these two verses come in the middle of a song of praise sung by David. David was expressing praise and thankfulness to God at a pretty significant juncture in the history of Israel. The Ark of the Covenant was being brought into the city of Jerusalem. It would eventually be enshrined in the Temple (constructed under Solomon). But David was celebrating it being brought into the Tabernacle.

When you've set the stage, lead your group in a discussion asking questions similar to the following:

- **What does the word ascribe mean to you?**
 - *Answer:* The word "ascribe" is great. It simply means to "attribute a quality to something or someone." If you call your wife beautiful, you're ascribing beauty to her. If she calls you handsome (or stubborn), well, the same is true.
- **Something is interesting about what David ascribes to God here. David is ascribing characteristics to God that are true. These things are aspects of God's character. What characteristics does David ascribe to God?**
 - *Answer:* Glory and strength.
- **There is a subtle difference in the terms "glorifying God" and "God's glory." How would you define God's glory?**
 - *Answer:* Defining God's glory can be tricky. We know what we mean, but it's hard to put into words. *The New Dictionary of Theology* defines it as "the fundamental characteristic of God." The most common Hebrew word for glory is translated, "heavy, weighty, burdensome." It implies the weight or seriousness of

who God is. The New Testament brings in the idea of God's reputation. God's glory can be manifest in His appearance, but it is true that God simply HAS glory apart from any physical appearance, and it's also true that His glory is eternal. Understanding God's glory may be easier if we consider it as the total of all that He is. Wrap up all God's characteristics, His power, His holiness, all of it, and if you can take that in, that is His glory.

- **OK, so, connect the dots. If that is what God's glory is, what does it mean to "glorify God"?**

- o *Answer:* When we *glorify* God, when we, in David's words, "ascribe" glory to Him, we are shining a light on His glory. We are making it known. We are highlighting it, pointing to it.

- **Here's where the rubber meets the road: HOW do we do this? You aren't called to sit on the couch and glorify God all day. You have tasks. You have responsibilities. You have vocations that God has called you to. When we say our purpose as men is to glorify God, how does this look as you go about your daily life? Give some examples?**

- o Answers will vary. You may need to help men think about this by suggesting some sub-categories. How does this look in your specific workplace? How does this specifically look like in your marriage? How does this look like at the ballfield with your kids? How does this look like as you go about your hobbies? How does it look at the gym, or the hunting camp, or playing video games with your friends? Work to drive home the practical nature of this question. This is important. How we live this out is critical in becoming the men God has called us to be.

- **Last question: Why? Why is our main purpose to glorify God? Why isn't our main purpose to share the Gospel or serve God (both of which are important aspects of our purpose)?**

- o *Answer:* The answer lies in vs. 29: "the glory due his name." God is uniquely worthy of our glory. He alone is DUE the glory that our lives, well-lived, can bring to Him. He is the life-giver. He is the source of all that we have. He is perfectly holy and sovereign. Glorifying God is the only right response to Him.

FINALLY, ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on one main takeaway from this session. Say something like:

- **This is a big topic. A fun topic. A fulfilling topic. But a big one. So, for us, we have to work to bring it down and make it practical. Here are a few questions to leave you with, in the form of a challenge, to help us apply this truth.**

- 1) How are you doing at living out your purpose? Do this even though it may seem trivial: make a list of how you glorify God in the main areas of your life. Write down categories like work, marriage, parenting, hobbies, and so on. Then, under each category, write down specific things you do to bring glory to God. This exercise will help you in a few ways. It will show you areas in which you are obedient in living out your purpose, and areas where you could pursue your purpose more faithfully. Let this exercise guide you in evaluating how you live out your purpose.
- 2) Your calling and your purpose are two different things. You can be called to be an accountant, a teacher, a mechanic, a lawyer, a minister, and so on. But your purpose never changes. The question you must answer is, "As a/an _____, how do I glorify God?" Fill in the blank with your occupation. What are some practical ways you can glorify God as you pursue the vocational calling God has led you to pursue?
- 3) Here's a very hard truth: "Habits of unrepentant sin will directly impact your purpose." Every man sins. While we strive to be godly in all that we do, we are saddled with a sin-nature. We will never be perfect this side of heaven.



PURPOSE

SESSION 1

But sin and sin habits are two different things. Do you have a sin habit that you have been unable to kick? Do you struggle with lust? Anger? A critical spirit? A lack of grace? These are all sins that men struggle with. But if you cannot seem to overcome the hold that a specific sin has over you, it's time to do the hard work of repentance. If you know right now that you have sin habit keeping you from pursuing your purpose as you should, do the work with God and others in your life to break the hold this sin has over you.

Allow the group to consider what aspect of their faith God is leading them to evaluate. If it feels appropriate, allow there to be some discussion about the kind of evaluation they find themselves considering.

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them, and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.