



FUTUREVILLE

DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE FOR TODAY BY REIMAGINING TOMORROW

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Author of *With: Reimagining The Way You Relate to God*

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1: VISION

1. In your experience, what has been the church's message about the future? How has this influenced what you believe matters most today?
2. What experiences, positive or negative, have most influenced the way you think about the future?
3. Do you believe the future will be better or worse than the present?
4. What matters more to God: being a missionary or being a gardener? Why?

CHAPTER 2: CULMINATION

1. Think about teachings you've heard or read concerning the "end times" in the past. Describe the tone and emphases of these teachings. Did they fill you with hope, or fear, or both?
2. Why did God create humans? How did the description of the garden of Eden in this chapter shift the way you think about work?
3. *Shalom* describes the world when everything is right, whole, and flourishing. How did Jesus bring shalom during his earthly ministry? What might his example mean for the way we live today?
4. In Revelation, rather than seeing people ascending into heaven, John sees the city of God descending to the earth. What might be significant about this? How does this challenge your assumptions about the future?

CHAPTER 3: EVOLUTION

1. Would you describe yourself as someone who believes humanity is gradually improving or steadily declining? Share your reasons.
2. Why are Christians, and particularly young people, attracted to messages about "changing the world"? What do these calls appeal to in you?
3. Who is most celebrated in your church or Christian

community? How is this communicated, and what messages are sent, directly or indirectly, as a result?

4. Share an example from your own experience of how Christians attempting to bring positive change in fact caused conflict and harm.

CHAPTER 4: EVACUATION

1. How are Christians perceived in your community and in our society? How might this perception be the natural outcome of Christians believing the earth is doomed?
2. Share an experience of feeling guilty about not doing enough for God's mission or the church. What made you feel this way? How did you respond?
3. How do you see the value of safety being pursued by Christians? What is good about this? How might it be unhelpful?
4. Have you ever entertained the idea of leaving your present vocation to serve in a full-time ministry role? What sparked that idea? How would your community respond to such a decision?

CHAPTER 5: RESURRECTION

1. Thinking back to God's original intent for humanity (see chapter 2), in what ways did Jesus fulfill Adam's original purpose?

2. What have you been taught about the significance of Jesus' resurrection in the past? Why does it matter to Christians?
3. If God is interested in redeeming our bodies and this earth, not simply taking souls to a nonphysical heaven, what are the implications for the way Christians live? How does this change the way we think about our purpose?
4. Speculate together. What do you think might endure from the present age for eternity? What will not endure? How does this challenge what you've been taught in the past about the future?

CHAPTER 6: VOCATION

1. Do you live as if there is a division between secular and sacred work? How is this division evident in your own life and activities?
2. When did you first sense a calling to a specific task or work? What did you do to test that calling or determine whether it was a fit with your gifts and abilities?
3. Describe your experiences within the church or a Christian community. Share a time you felt empowered and equipped to accomplish what Christ is calling you to do in the world? Likewise, can you identify a time you felt controlled and used to further the agenda of the organization? How would you describe the leaders in each of these settings?
4. What is something your church could do to

communicate the value and dignity of each person's calling? How could you begin to do this in your own relationships with other Christians?

CHAPTER 7: ORDER

1. How have relationships with others affected your relationship with God? Describe how your communion with God has influenced your relationship with another person. Why are we tempted to disconnect these two areas of our lives?
2. Share about someone in your life or community who has cultivated order. How has God used this person to bring shalom? How would things be worse if this person stopped using his or her gifts for the benefit of others?
3. What should matter more for Christians: alleviating present suffering or eternal suffering? What's wrong with this question?
4. Read Isaiah 58. What is the link between the way God's people worship and the cultivation of justice in the world? How might you apply the message of Isaiah 58 to your church or Christian community?

CHAPTER 8: BEAUTY

1. Describe the last time you were arrested by beauty. What captured your attention? Why? How did it make you feel? What do you think makes God feel that way?

2. In what ways do you see Christians forcing beauty to submit to practicality? When is this a good thing, and how can it be taken too far?
3. Do you think it is ever acceptable for a church to spend money on purely aesthetic, impractical things? Why or why not?
4. Would you describe yourself more like the disciples or the woman in the story from Mark 14:3–9?
5. Share something you've done purely for the joy of it without any consideration of its practicality. Do you think God approves or disapproves of such behavior? Why?

CHAPTER 9: ABUNDANCE

1. How might a business operate differently if those running it were interested in flourishing the community and not just making financial profits? What would the business measure other than the bottom line?
2. How do you feel when the offering is collected during worship gatherings in your church or Christian community? Why do you feel this way?
3. What fears do you have about giving your money away? What do your fears reveal about where you place your faith?
4. What is scarce in your community? How might you, together with others, begin to address this scarcity to create abundance?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

IN CHAPTER 6, WE REDISCOVERED THE IMPORTANCE of vocation—the belief that God has called each of his children to a specific work in his world. As noted in that chapter, we can access our common callings through reading the Scriptures. Our individual, specific calling, however, is not as easily discovered. To know what we are called to cultivate in this world, and where, we must have three things:

1. A vibrant communion with God through faith in Christ and the presence of his Spirit.
2. A growing sense of humble self-awareness that acknowledges our gifts, abilities, weaknesses, and wounds.
3. A healthy set of relationships with Christian sisters and brothers who can confirm, and at times redirect, our sense of calling.

This book was written to help you reframe the way you think about the future, the world, and your purpose within it. Discerning your specific purpose, however, is an ongoing work I hope you will continue to investigate in communion with God and your church. To help you on that journey, here are a few resources I recommend:

Guinness, Os. *The Call: Finding and Filling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003).

Palmer, Parker J. *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

Smith, Gordon T. *Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011).