

Refuting the Purpose Driven Life

The Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, California started with just two families in 1980 has more than 15,000 baptized church members today with an average Sunday attendance of 19,000. Rick Warren attributed this rapid growth to his magical formula now written in the book "The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?" (A Campus for Christ and Zondervan Publication 2002)

The book has taken the world by storm; more than 2000 churches around the world used it in 2003 as part of 40 days of purpose. These congregations commit to read one chapter of the book a day and participate in an rigid program of worship, fellowship and mission. More than 1,500 churches in the 50 states in the U.S. and 1000 churches in 10 nations participated in the pilot program in 2002. As projected, more than two million people will have joined a 40 days of Purpose at end of 2004.

According to The Purpose Driven Life (PDL) God created individuals with five distinct eternal purposes, namely worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and mission. Warren missed God's perfect plan of grace for the imperfect man, distorting the doctrine of grace, imputation and divine essence.

Warren has a distorted viewpoint of sin, confusing it with guilt and which caused Cain's separation from God (pages 23, 28 and 54). Guilt then, is the failure to give God the glory. We must understand that the glory of God is eternal. He is the Source and Cause of all the glory. The original sin of Adam is not the failure to glorify God, the sin of Lucifer was not his failure to glorify God. According to PDL the greatest problems of man are lack of purpose, guilt, resentment, anger, materialism, fear, need for approval, and lack of drives, unused potential, stress and unfulfilled life (page 30).

Warren did not view the biblical concept of sin as man's greatest problem.

Warren presented the Gospel in nine words (58) without telling the reader why he needs to accept the free gift of salvation and why Christ has died for his sin. Warren presented another gospel empty of God's holiness and man's depravity, missing the grace of God and the atoning work of Christ.

He presented an ecumenical gospel acceptable even to the cults. Warren is making Christ likable and His Gospel very friendly to everyone, giving the reader the impression that the access to heaven and earthly greatness is the nine magical words he formulated, *Jesus, I believe in you, and I receive you*. Warren missed the truth of 1 Corinthians 1:23-25.

Warren has introduced numerous phraseology that sounds biblical especially to those who are ignorant of Bible doctrine. The discerning (those with Bible doctrine in their souls) may agree to about 30% truth but can easily discriminate and classify the 70% lies he formulated. In general,

Warren is world-class writer who was able to capture his readers with his articulation of fictitious ideas (like J.K. Rowling), but he is an evil Bible expositor for distorting the truth of the Scripture (Matthew 15:7). Like a master cultic apologist, Warren uses excessive proof-texts of unusual paraphrases from 15 Bible translations (14 of which are questionable).

Warren has driven the truth from the PDL and masterly reversed the truth of the Bible. He is dynamically serving Satan by deceiving people with his gospel. To make his point, Warren has mastered the art of making Reversed Translation of the Scriptural text he used. For example his version of Matthew 16:25 is *Self-help is no self help at all.

Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self (page 19). In Appendix 3, Warren reasoned that he wanted the reader to see the meaning of the Scripture in new, fresh ways. He has forgotten that Christians has the indwelling Holy Spirit who is responsible for teaching the Word of God. We do not need the unusual paraphrases which he invented.

Most of Warren's supporting verses are out of context and vaguely applied. That is because he diminishes the importance of the Scripture in the life of the believer. For him, the purposes becomes the standard you use to evaluate which activities are essential and which aren't (31). To become best friend of God one maintains constant conversation with God (89).

Abraham became a friend of God by living according to divine protocol, which is possible only when the believer has the maximum Bible doctrine in his soul. For Warren, service is the pathway to real significance (234), in effect; he was trying to manufacture great servants driven by wrong purposes and distorted motivation.

For Warren God's purpose for creating man is part of His "planned of pleasure" (63). It seems that Warren is totally ignorant even of the most basic Bible doctrines.

He missed God's eternal, perfect, sovereign will for creating man. PDL is a gallery of Christian phraseology enjoyable for nominal believers but nuisance for those who are studying the Bible systematically. Most of the phrases he invented are non-sense and has no biblical basis. For example, "The best expression of love is time", "the greatest gift you can give someone is time" (127). You can be with someone for 20 years without leaving his side but it does not mean you love him.

Warren misinterpreted almost all the passages he used in PDL. For example, he advocates public confession of sin (212), using James 5:16 as basis of his teaching. There is nowhere in the Bible that we are commanded to confess our sins publicly. The context of James 5:16 is between two party who have sinned against each other and who are instructed to reconcile.

In interpreting the Scripture, we need to use four basic approaches: namely, categorical, grammatical, historical and exegetical. In few part of PDL, Warren used a little of historical approach not for clarity of the passage but just to bring out his point to the attention of the reader.

Warren's formula for defeating sin and temptation is to direct your mind or feelings to something. Don't fight the thought; just change the channel of your mind and get interested in another idea (209-210). He confuses the temptation of 1 Corinthians 10:13 with the sin of the believers. The context of 1 Corinthians 10:13 is undeserved suffering or testing of the spiritual mature believer not the sin of the carnal believers.

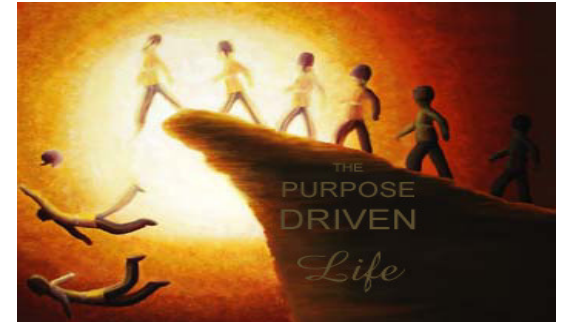
Warren confused spiritual maturity with religious involvement, mission, ministry, fellowship and worship. Spiritual maturity is measured by maximum Bible doctrine stored and functional in the soul of the believer. The growth of any church is measured by the quantity of Bible doctrine in the souls of the church members, not by 40-days of purpose.

Rick Warren's, Saddleback Community Church is full of pseudo and infant Christians whom he had deceived with another gospel. I am not criticizing God*s method of blessing, (as he had warned in his book Purpose-Driven Church), since that cannot be considered blessing from God.

The impact of PDL to the churches is not the work of God since He cannot compromise His Holiness with humanistic and heretical lies of man. The popularity of PDL and Rick Warren and the numerical growth of churches are not from God. All the cults create the same "impact". The Lord Jesus Christ, the genuine Gospel, the true Bible doctrine are not that popular like all the cultic leaders and their teachings!

"Test every spirit" (every teacher, every preacher, every teaching)... "because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

PDL is the sum total of humanistic, man-centered, mechanistic approach to pseudo Christianity, pseudo spirituality and pseudo blessings. PDL is fake map to greatness that the Grahams are alluring the readers to bite. PDL could better stand for "Program for Deception of Satan". I agreed with Billy and Franklin Graham when they said, "Make sure you're not missing the point of your life" but I edited their statement and add, "Do not read the Purpose-Driven Life!" so that you will not miss the point of your life.



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