

STUDY GUIDE

FIVE SESSIONS

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE

**F
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R**

**A Strategy for Living the Life
God Wants You to Live**

JEFF HENDERSON

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God Wants You to Live

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Know What You're FOR Study Guide

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INTRODUCTION

I've spent a fair amount of my personal life and professional career trying to figure out what gets people's attention and what makes things grow. As a former marketing executive, I've worked with organizations like the Atlanta Braves and Chick-fil-A to help them figure out the best way to grow in their businesses. As a pastor at Gwinnett Church in Atlanta, Georgia, I've spent time figuring out how we as a church can contribute to the growth of our community and respond to individuals who come through our doors every week . . . while also challenging them to grow. As a parent and a husband, I'm definitely concerned about how to foster a home environment that encourages growth within the context of our ever-evolving family life.

Now, if you forced me to describe *growth* in a simple way that everyone could understand, I would point you to two key questions that we are going to discuss in this study. The first is: *What are you for?* The second question is: *What are you known for?* My experience is that these two questions are the catalysts for growth in businesses, organizations, churches, and in our everyday lives. So, during the course of this study, we are going to discover how those two questions can grow our work lives, our relationships, our community, and our world.

But more important, we are going to take a look at *who* and *what* God is for. All too often, people know more about what Christians are *against* rather than what they are for. My hope is this study helps you change that narrative for those

in your world who think the church—and thus God—is against them. The Bible is clear we are to love others, extend grace, and get along as much as possible . . . and our actions speak louder than our words. “Just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions” (Matthew 7:20 NLT).

Here’s the reason why I think this idea of being known for what you are FOR is so important: when you can articulate your answers to these two questions, it will not only grow your relationships, your business, your community, or your church, but it will also grow you and your influence as well. This is a revolutionary way to live and a powerful strategy for showing the world around you what you are for . . . and that you really are for them.

Jeff Henderson

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

The *Know What You're FOR* video study is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or any small group gathering. Each session begins with a welcome section, several questions to get you thinking about the topic, and a reading from the Bible. You will then watch a video with Jeff Henderson and engage in some small-group discussion. You will close each session with a time of personal reflection and prayer as a group.

Each person in the group should have a copy of this study guide. You may also want to have a copy of the *Know What You're FOR* book, as reading it alongside the curriculum will provide you with deeper insights and make the journey more meaningful (for your professional life and for you personally). The “For Next Week” section at the end of each between-sessions personal study lists the chapters in the book that correspond to material you are covering.

To get the most out of your group experience, keep the following points in mind. First, the real growth in this study will happen during your small-group time. This is where you will process the content of the teaching for the week, ask questions, and learn from others as you hear what God is doing in their lives. For this reason, it is important for you to be fully committed to the group and attend each session so you can build trust and rapport with the other members. If you choose to only go through the motions, or if you refrain from participating, there is a lesser chance you will find what you are looking for during this study.

Second, remember the goal of your small group is to serve as a place where people can share, learn about God, and build intimacy and friendship. For this reason, seek to make your group a safe place. This means being honest about your thoughts and feelings and listening carefully to everyone else's opinion. (Note that if you are a group leader, there are additional instructions and resources in the back of the book for leading a productive discussion group.)

Third, resist the temptation to fix a problem someone might be having or to correct his or her theology, as that's not the purpose of your small-group time. Also, keep everything your group shares confidential. This will foster a rewarding sense of community in your group and create a place where people can heal, be challenged, and grow spiritually.

Following your group time, reflect on the material you have covered by engaging in any or all of the between-sessions activities. For each session, you may wish to complete the personal study in one sitting or spread it out over a few days (for example, working on it a half-hour a day on different days that week). If you are unable to finish (or even start!) your between-sessions personal study, you should still attend the group study video session. You are still wanted and welcome at the group even if you don't have your "homework" done.

Keep in mind the videos, discussion questions, and activities are simply meant to kick-start your imagination so you are not only open to what God wants you to hear but also how to apply it to your life. So, as you go through this study, be watching for what God is saying to you as you discover a healthy strategy for living the life God wants you to live.

SESSION ONE

WHAT **F** ARE **O** YOU **R**

Everything you and I do as leaders is about people.

People want to know they matter.

People want to know we are FOR them.

JOHN MAXWELL

WELCOME

Today we are going to talk about two questions that I believe are essential for living the life God wants you to live: (1) *What do you want to be known for?* and (2) *What are you known for?* These questions are similar, but notice the subtle difference. The first is about what you *want* to be known for in your roles and responsibilities in life. The second is about what you are *actually* known for in your community. These two questions will not only affect your personal life but will also have the capacity to influence your relationships, community, and world—especially if you are willing to honestly assess the answers and make adjustments to close the gap.

I have the privilege of working with teams and leaders in businesses and community organizations. What I find is that these two questions have a huge impact in those spaces. Think of it this way. If a shoe company says they are for their customers, but they won't return a damaged shoe because of company policy, then who are they *really* for—the customers or the company? I'm guessing many of you have experienced this kind of “customer service.”

On the flip side, I think about the story of an employee at a shoe company who spent six hours on the phone with a customer who had just lost her husband. When the call ended hours later, there was a budding friendship between the

employee and the customer . . . but no shoe purchase. The leadership team at the company celebrated the employee anyway for *delivering happiness* (the company mission) to a customer in need. This is a great example of alignment between what the company *wants* to be known for and what they actually *are* known for.

Now, I realize that I am getting a little ahead of myself here. But I want you to hear this: *when you are known for one thing but talk about being known for something else, you lose credibility*. And once you lose credibility, you lose trust. Trust takes a lifetime to gain . . . but only a moment to lose. For this reason, we need to determine if these two areas are out of alignment. So, as we begin this study, let's have the courage to honestly ask these key questions and figure out how to close the gap. As we do, we will be committing to growth as individuals and as a community.

SHARE

If you or any of your group members are just getting to know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to kick things off for this session, discuss one of the following questions:

- What is your favorite role or responsibility in life right now?

— or —

- What descriptive words do people use about you?

WATCH

Play the video segment for session one. As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

Notes

There are two key questions that can help grow your business, your organization, your career . . . and you as an individual.

The first question is *what do you want to be known for?*
What do you want to be known for in the roles and responsibilities of your life?

The second question is *what are you known for?* This question is for the people in your life—what do they perceive to be your values, goals, and priorities?

Growth happens when the answers to these two questions match. You grow as a person but also in your roles and

responsibilities in your business, your church, and your organization.

When the Son of Man comes, will he find
faith on the earth?

JESUS (LUKE 18:8)

The reality is that none of us are perfect. There is going to be a gap between what you want to be known for and what you actually are known for. The goal is to close the gap!

These two questions can grow your business and your organization. What does your business *want* to be known for? What *is* your business known for? When the answers match, your customers experience your vision and tell others about your company.

The two questions can also grow your church. What does your church *want* to be known for? What *is* your church known for in the community? When the answers match, those who have said no to church in the past can realize the church is still saying yes to them.

In a hyper-cynical world that often is known for what it's *against*, let's be a group of people known for who and what we're *for*.

Vision is like a bucket of water. The more words in the bucket, the more the vision spills out.

JEFF HENDERSON

DISCUSS

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. Think about the first question: *What do you want to be known for?* This relates to the roles and responsibilities

that you have in your life. How would you answer this question?

2. Think about the second question: *What are you known for?* This relates to how other people in your world perceive your vision, goals, and priorities. How do you think they would answer this question?
3. In what specific area of your life might there be a gap between what you want to be known *for* and what you *are* known *for*? What areas of your life do you feel are in the greatest alignment between these two questions?
4. What factors do you think contribute to the gap or the alignment in your life? How would the people closest to you answer this question?

5. Read Acts 15:12–21. In this story, James, the brother of Jesus and leader of the church, was concerned about unnecessary barriers that were keeping people out of the church. How does this passage relate to what we are talking about today? What do you think are some of the barriers in the church today that turn people away?

6. What do you think the impact would be if people in the world really believed that the church was *for* them? What part could you play in making this happen?

RESPOND

Briefly review the outline for the video teaching and any notes you took. In the space below, write down the most significant point you took away from this session.

What specific action steps will you take this week to move toward what you want to be known *for*?

PRAY

Close your time together by praying for each other. Pray that God would clear up any confusion and help each one of you discover what you want to be known *for*. Ask God for the wisdom and self-awareness to pay attention to what you *are* known *for*. And if there's any disparity between the two, ask God to give you the courage to move toward more alignment in your life, as individuals and as a community. Write down any specific prayer requests in the space below so you can remember to continue praying throughout the week.

SESSION ONE

BETWEEN-SESSIONS PERSONAL STUDY

Just as our cars need a regular tune-up and our bodies need physical therapy on occasion, our souls require realignment as well. In this session, we saw that most of us need realignment between what we're *for* and what we're *known for*. Start this process right this week by spending time with God each day and engaging in any of the following activities. Be sure to make any notes about the experience, as there will be time at the start of the next session to share any insights that you learned. In addition, if you have not done so already, you may want to read the prologue and introduction to the *Know What You're FOR* book.

FIND OUT WHAT YOU'RE FOR

Writer Annie Dillard says, "The way we spend our days is the way we spend our lives."¹ In other words, the small choices we make every day ultimately determine the way we live our entire lives. So, whether you are structured and methodical or spontaneous and full of variety in the way you spend your time, the things you do each and every day say something about who and what you're for. With this in mind, answer the following questions:

Consider your *personal and professional life*. What kinds of activities fill up your daily routine and your weekly or monthly rhythm?

What do you do when you have down time or a few free moments to yourself?

Take an honest assessment of your list. Is this how you want to be spending your time? If not, what things could you *stop* doing so you could *start* doing something else?

What does your list tell you about what you're *for*? Are you *for* the things you really want to be *for*? Explain.

Now consider the people around you. What do they say about the way you live your life? Is this what you want to be known for? Why or why not?

Where do you believe is the largest gap between what you say you're *for* and what others know you *for*? What are you going to do about that gap?

Read Romans 7:15–20. Paul understood this tension well—when you say you are for one thing but are known for something else. All of life on this side of heaven will be a constant push-and-pull to align your actions with your intentions. Sometimes you will manage the tension well, and other times you will struggle . . . as did Paul. Close your time in prayer by thanking God for the opportunities you've been given to discover what you're *for*. Ask him to give you the courage to act in a way so that what you're *for* is also what you're *known for*.

FOR OTHERS

Whether you spend your days in the boardroom, the classroom, or the living room, it's a pretty safe bet to say that everywhere you go people are watching how you live your life.

According to John Maxwell, the people you serve are constantly asking three questions about you and the way you show up with them:

1. Do you like me?
2. Can you help me?
3. Can I trust you?²

I've heard the staff at Gwinnett Church ask these questions of me, as well as the teams I've coached in business or out on the playing field. Even my own kids ask these questions of me. The truth is all kids want to know if their parents actually like them, if they can help them, and if they can be trusted. But here's the deal: remember, the first two questions aren't about *us* but about *them*. This is because people want to know they matter to us. People want to know we're *for* them. So consider how you make people feel when they're in your presence as you answer these questions:

Which people in your life might be asking those three questions about you right now? Make a list of names and write a short sentence as to why they might be asking.

What have you done recently to let those people know you care about them? What could you do *this week* to let a few more people know that you are *for* them?

Read Mark 10:35–45. In the New Testament, Jesus gives specific instructions throughout the Gospels on how to serve and love each other well. What does Jesus say about serving others?

How does the response Jesus gave to James and John apply to your life today?

Read Mark 12:28–30. Jesus said you love God by loving others—and in order to love others, you must love yourself. How does the way you love yourself reflect the way you love others?

Do you have a hard time or an easy time loving yourself? Do you have a hard or easy time loving others? Explain.

Spend a few moments reflecting on God's love. In what ways have you experienced it lately?

Is there an idea, quote, or passage of Scripture that inspires you to love and serve others? If so, write it here:

Close your time in prayer by thanking God for his love for you and the way he allows you to love yourself and serve the people around you. Ask him to give you opportunities this week to let your people know that you like them, you can help them, and they can trust you.

YOUR LIFE STRATEGY

Let's talk about your life strategy. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, the word *strategy* means "a careful plan or method, or the art of devising or employing plans toward a goal."³ Your life strategy is the way—the plan or method—that you live out your answers to the two key questions we discussed this week. Whether you want to admit it or not, you're already living out *some* kind of life strategy. But is it the one you really want to be living? Consider your life strategy as you answer the following questions:

What thoughts or questions come to mind when you think about having a life strategy?

Consider your daily routines and your weekly or monthly rhythms. How would you define what your life strategy has been until this point?

There are two vital components to a life strategy: your *purpose* and your *actions*. In fact, your life strategy is your purpose in

action. How would you describe your specific purpose in life? What actions do you take to live out that purpose?

Now that you've identified what you're for and you've defined your purpose and your actions, revisit your life strategy. Where do you want your life strategy to be moving toward?

Your life strategy should easily translate to any environment where you are working, living, and serving. This is important because you don't just *tell* people you are for them but *show* them with your actions. Given this, how does your relationship with God influence your life strategy?

What keeps you from creating an intentional method or plan for your life? Are there any fears, past messages, or people holding you back from leaning into your life strategy?

Who could you share your life strategy with this week? Think of one or two people in your life who are safe and trustworthy—people who are *for* you. Write their names below.

If you're still kicking around a few life strategy ideas, ask for their input. What do they see as your life strategy? How would they describe your purpose and your actions?

Read Luke 6:43–44. In these verses, Jesus refers to the fruit in your life . . . and by *fruit*, he means your words and actions. Close your time in prayer today by thanking God for giving you the desire to produce good things from a good heart. Ask him to give you the willingness to consider the way he wants you to live out your life strategy.

FOR YOU

When you board a plane, every airline attendant says the same thing: “In case of an emergency, put your own oxygen mask on first.” Life requires a lot of energy, creativity, and leadership, which means you need to spend time taking care of yourself so you can be the best version of you to give to others. Truly, the greatest gift you can give to the world around you is an inspired, rejuvenated, fully alive *you*. With this in mind,

read Galatians 6:1–10. Use the space below to journal any thoughts, prayers, or ideas that come to mind as you read.

For Next Week: Review the Prologue and Introduction in the *Know What You're FOR* book and use the space below to write any insights or questions from your personal study that you want to discuss at the next group meeting. In preparation for next week, consider reviewing section one, chapters 1–7, in *Know What You're For*.