Four Tables
Facilitator's Guide

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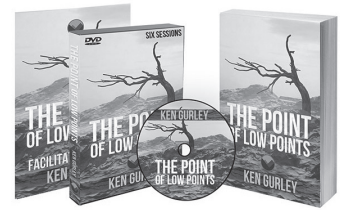

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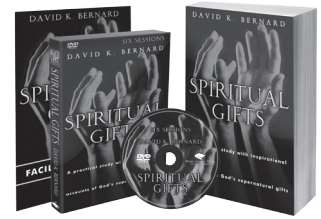

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Small Group

Facilitator's Guide

Purpose: The Four Tables studies the four action verbs necessary for a believer to fulfill his or her divine purpose in life. This can be used for any small group, but especially for those who desire to grow in God and to pursue a meaningful ministry within the local church.

Structure: There are six sessions in this study. Each of these six sessions generally corresponds to the six sections of the book. Prior to each session, students should read the following sections of the book:

Four Tables Overview

Session One	A Repurposed Life *Read the first chapter, the author's introduction, before meeting.*
Session Two	Your Second Chance *Read chapters 2-4 concerning Table One (Love) of the book before meeting.*
Session Three	No Bonsai for Me *Read chapters 5-7 concerning Table Two (Grow) before meeting.*
Session Four	The High Calling of Service *Read chapters 8-10 concerning Table Three (Serve) before meeting.*
Session Five	Your City Awaits *Read chapters 11-13 concerning Table Four (Go) before meeting.*
Session Six	The Fourfold Calling *Read chapter 14, the author's conclusion, before the meeting.*

A Word from the Author:

First, allow me to offer a word of thanks for selecting this material for your small group. I understand that the choice of material is an intensely personal decision that can make or break a small group session. I hope you find this material meets your expectations.

This material is designed to help each person repurpose themselves along God's plan for their lives through the four "action verbs" found in the Four Tables: Love, Grow, Serve, and Go. If enough people in enough places do this, it is my firm expectation that a harvest of great proportions will be unleashed. If a particular class, segment of the church, or even an entire assembly works its way through this material, I strongly suspect the church will see a great difference in its meaningfulness and relevance to the community in which it ministers.

As a facilitator, your role is pivotal to the group grasping its potential. For example, when we discuss the Serve Table, we refer to various tests to help people determine their gifting and possible places of service. You may wish to acquaint yourself with the tests available and pass these along to the participants. In the discussion of the Grow Table, we mention the importance of small groups in maturing and discipling people. You may notice, in this context, that a potential small group leader is present in your group. As Paul saw the one who had faith to be healed, pray that God will give you an understanding of who may make a great small group leader.

You may find many examples of the four action verbs in the lives of contemporaries and scriptural characters. It's always good to point these out and discuss them. Training our eyes to see these principles in the lives of others promotes the application of them in our own lives. Action follows vision: we do what we see.

You may choose to create visual effects for your sessions. Perhaps four tables with items resting upon them that represent the four action verbs. Or you may be able to create posters with these words to simulate the four tables. If you choose the posters, there may be time in each class for you to ask for commitments for each of the items. For example, "How do we commit to love God more?"

Love, Grow, Serve, and Go are the four action verbs of a successful life and ministry. As a facilitator in this study, you are fulfilling many of these commands in helping others come to an understanding of their identity in Christ and their role in the church. It's no exaggeration to say that all four of the tables are present in each and every small group study: we love God and one another; we grow together in community; we serve one another with our unique gifts and callings; and we go from this place to touch other lives.

If those in the household of Stephanas earned a good reward for addicting themselves to the ministry of the saints, surely God has a reward for you in this endeavor (I Corinthians 16:15, KJV). Your service to Him through others will affect lives for eternity.

Study Materials

Each member of your group needs to have a copy of the book, *Four Tables*. As facilitator, you will also need the DVD of the six video sessions and this guide.

Launching the Study

Small group studies vary widely in methods. Several general considerations for launching this particular study are:

- Prayerfully seek God's guidance concerning the group's composition and location. Continually ask God to open up the hearts and minds of participants.
- Some "small groups" can ironically grow very large, but this material requires a smaller group (up to ten members) and not a medium-sized or larger group. It is highly likely that as this material is taught the results will attract more participants. Prayerfully consider how you will accommodate this interest either through more groups or modification of the sessions to permit new members. Since this study is sequential (i.e., moving from table to table), it's hard, but not impossible, to pick up additional members in the existing study.
- The room setting suggested is typical for small groups: a circular area that permits the participants to clearly see each other, the facilitator, and the DVD player/screen.
- As facilitator, you need to read the entire book in advance to absorb the lessons explored in each section. It is also recommended that you view all of the video sessions prior to the launch of the small group. Perhaps the session that requires the most preparation is the one emphasizing service. People want to do things for God and as facilitator you need to be prepared to channel people into finding the information and connections needed to make this happen.
- Be certain that each member has purchased a book and instruct each to read the opening chapter prior to the first session. At the close of each session, instruct the participants to read the chapters associated with the next session.

Conducting the Study

This curriculum is versatile enough to accommodate any particular pattern of small group study that you may use. It does follow the following pattern: Open with prayer; read Scripture; view video session; ask questions and facilitate discussion; and close with prayer.

- You may wish to assign the reading of Scriptures to different individuals. The book cites the New King James Version but you may choose to use another accepted version.
- Read over the discussion questions each week and think through possible answers that may be given. Prepare to lead the conversation. Not all of the questions need to be covered. There may be ample and profitable discussion following one of the questions and it is permissible to explore only one or two. Yet if you do omit some questions, it may be beneficial to make mention of them and give your responses. You may also choose to paraphrase the questions in a different format.
- Exceptions to the above are found in the opening and closing sessions. At the opening session, you will ask participants to complete the question "Up to this point, the purpose of my life has been _____." Provide each person with an envelope in which to seal their answers. Ask them to write their names on the exterior and submit them to the facilitator. These will remain sealed and will be opened by the participants in the last session. Hopefully, the small group material and discussion will help them gain insights into their divine purpose. At the end of the study they will answer this same question again and see if God has given them some understanding throughout the series.
- As with all small group meetings, watch out for the "conversation hogs" in the discussion. Be prepared to call on others to respond. It's a truism (and often true!) that still waters run deep. Some of the quietest people in the group have some profound insights that are needed in the group's discussion.
- Be prepared as well to deal with the "conversation hijackers" who will take the discussion into an unintended direction. Your direct engagement in the discussion is imperative to keep the meeting's focus.
- At the close of each meeting, reinforce the idea that we are created with divine intent and purpose. Just as Jesus went to the fig tree expecting fruit, our Lord expects things from each of us. Help them find their place at the Four Tables and make specific applications to their daily lives.

I hope you have a great trip through this material and find the insights God has for you and your small group.

His greatest blessings to you!

Ken Gurley

Session One

A Repurposed Life

Read the first chapter, the author's introduction, before meeting

Objective

This session explores the possibility of repurposing one's life from meaningless to meaningful activities. Each of the four tables are introduced as objectives to motivate individuals to a new level of meaning and purpose.

Scripture Passages

Ezekiel 40:40-43 *(The Four Tables)*
Jeremiah 18:1-6 *(The Potter's House)*

Watch Session 1 Video: *A Repurposed Life*

Discuss the following questions:

1. Describe how unasked questions can become the "sticking points" (the places we get stuck) in our lives.

2. Many people have never found God's high calling in their lives. They've either not sought after or understood God's plan for them. Why do you think that is the case?

3. "Stuck people," according to the author in the opening chapter, "have a vision problem." What we focus upon either brings movement or stagnation. Discuss a time in your life where something you dwelt upon either caused you to move forward or to not move at all.

4. The author encourages us to ask questions of ourselves including: "What is my purpose for being here?" and "What is my place and where do I belong?" Why do you think asking such questions is important?

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5. Write down the answer to this question, "Up to this point, the main purpose in my life has been_____." (If unsure, it's okay to write more than one response.)

Assignment

Read chapters 2-4 on Table One (Love) before the next meeting.

Each of us should focus our efforts on these four tables.

Each table represents a sphere of the purposeful life that will help you move from questions to answers, from distraction to direction, and from emptiness to fulfillment.

Session Two

Your Second Chance

Read chapters 2-4 concerning Table One (Love) of the book before meeting.

Objective

This session explores Table One (Love) and how when we reciprocate God's love, we unleash the single-greatest transforming power in our lives.

Scripture Passages

John 20:1-20 *(This story is told throughout the video session)*
Judges 6:36-40 *(Gideon's fleece)*
Jonah 3:1 *(Word comes to Jonah a second time)*
Acts 15:36-41; II Timothy 4:11 *(John Mark's story)*

Watch Session 2 Video: *Your Second Chance*

Discuss the following questions:

1. The author illustrates how the number four plays a prominent role in this life. Can you think of any other examples of the use of this number?

2. In Ezekiel's Temple, each of the four tables referenced was actually an altar. What does an altar mean to you?

3. The first mention of table in the Bible is found in Genesis 43 when Joseph revealed himself to his unsuspecting brethren. What significance do you think this has?

4. Love is called the most powerful transforming force in a person's life. Have you witnessed specific instances where a person's love for God or for someone else has changed them?

5. Discuss Augustine's expression, *ordo amorum*: "the order of the loves." What should be the order of our loves?

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6. A table and a cross have both vertical and horizontal elements. The vertical is love for God; the horizontal, our love for others. Describe how our love for others can be seen in our daily lives.

Assignment

Read chapters 5-7 concerning Table Two (Grow) of the book before meeting.

The Cross represents the ultimate Table of Love. It reveals that divine love is the motivation for all we do.

Our worship to Him, our outreach to the lost, and our love one for another are wrapped up in the Table of Love.

Session Three

No Bonsai for Me

Read chapters 5-7 concerning Table Two (Grow) of the book before meeting.

Objective

This session explores Table Two (Grow) and how a person transformed by God's love will begin to grow more like Him.

Scripture Passages

Genesis 1:11; Matthew 13:31-32; Acts 2:47, 16:5;
II Peter 1:8 *(Growth scriptures)*
Amos 6:1
Hebrews 10:24
Jeremiah 30:18-19

Watch Session 3 Video:
No Bonsai For Me

Discuss the following questions:

1. The apostle Paul often used the phrase "one another." All Scripture is given by God's inspiration and should be valued. Yet what value do we place on the constant use of this phrase?

2. The author states that the "one thing that can change your life . . . is to pour yourself into the lives of fellow believers." How have you found this to be true in your own life?

3. We live in a disconnected world where community is withering. How would the biblical concept of *koinonia* be of benefit in today's world?

4. The early church broke bread from house to house. What do you find attractive about such a practice?

5. How can we practice the "lost art of hospitality" in our own lives?

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Assignment

Read chapters 8-10 concerning Table Three (Serve) before meeting.

It's not good for us to dwell alone.

We need each other.

We need to break bread together.

We need to share our lives and our stories and hear the same from others.

Session Four

The High Calling of Service

Read chapters 8-10 concerning Table Three (Serve) before meeting.

Objective

This session explores Table Three (Serve) and the high calling of serving God by serving others.

Scripture Passages

Matthew 10:40-42
Matthew 20:28
Matthew 25:31-46
Luke 10:38-42
Colossians 3:23-24
Ephesians 6:7

Watch Session 4 Video:
The High Calling of Service

Discuss the following questions:

1. Albert Schweitzer said there are two types of people: helpers and non-helpers. How have you found this to be true in your own life?

2. Consider the long list of people identified as "servants" in Scripture. Why do you think we hear more about "leadership" than "servanthood?"

3. In human conflict, God is inviting someone to become a servant. Can you think of examples where this has been the case?

4. Why do you think it's so hard for us to serve others?

5. SHAPE is an acronym for Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences. How would knowing these areas help us find a suitable role in which to serve?

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6. Of the five techniques to improve your Serve Table experience, which do you think is the most relevant and why?

Assignment

Read chapters 11-13 concerning Table Four (Go) before meeting.

Each instrument has a part to play in the symphony of worship.

Each person has a role to fulfill in the drama of redemption.

Each person has a place to serve in the house of God.

Session Five

Your City Awaits

Read chapters 11-13 concerning Table Four (Go) before meeting.

Objective

This session explores Table Four (Go) and the role each person has to go into their city and reach people for the Lord.

Scripture Passages

Genesis 4:17, 11:2; Jonah 1:2; Luke 10:13 *(Cities)*
Mark 1:33
Acts 22:10
Matthew 22:1-10

Watch Session 5 Video:
Your City Awaits

Discuss the following questions:

1. Discuss this statement: "If you want to be remembered, then focus on the memorable . . . and there is nothing more memorable than souls."

2. Little is known about Ananias except that he reached the future apostle Paul. Little is known about Andrew, except that he brought his brother Simon Peter to Jesus. How do Ananias and Andrew motivate you to reach others?

3. The Spirit and the Bride issue a joint invitation to come to the Lord in the last chapter of the Bible. What are effective methods for inviting people to know the Lord?

4. Why do you think some people don't reach out to the lost?

5. In the Lord's parable of the Great Feast, Jesus described the master as wanting his house to be filled. What can we do to fill God's house?

Notes:

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6. Of the seven qualities found in those who frequent the Go Table, which one do you think is most important to you?

Assignment

Read chapter 14, the author's conclusion, before the meeting.

Each of us is invited
to share in
this same service.

With Jesus as our Guide,
we are called upon to
reach the people who are
hurting the most.

We are all called to
the Go Table.

Session Six

The Fourfold Calling

Read chapter 14, the author's conclusion, before the meeting.

Objective

This session recaps the Four Tables and illustrates their consequences in our daily lives.

Scripture Passages

Genesis 12, 13, and 22. *(Four Altars of Abraham)*
Matthew 22:34-40
Matthew 28:16-20

Watch Session 6 Video: *The Fourfold Calling*

Discuss the following questions:

1. Take a moment and give quick descriptions of each of the four tables.
2. Compare a gardener's pruning to the sacrifice of will required with the Four Tables.
3. How does the advice (i.e., Fix it. Close it. Or sell it.) from former GE CEO, Jack Welch, apply to the sacrifices required from us in the Four Tables?
4. Discuss the groupings of ministries under the four banners of Love, Grow, Serve, and Go.
5. Please revisit the question asked in the first session and again consider your response. "Up to this point, the main purpose in my life has been_____."

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In moving forward in God, the Four Tables can be a means of laying aside the old to embrace the new.

At each successive table, sacrifices are required, priorities are reshuffled, and new commitments are made.

More importantly, new life comes.