[I'm often asked, what surprises you about the teaching Theology?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

* The joy in the eyes of students
* The passion of engaging in Theological dialogue.
* The growth…
  + But, I want to use my hands to do the work of God and end spiritual emptiness.

[And I think it's because spiritual emptiness](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [is a universal disease. I think inside at some point, we put our heads down on the pillow and we go,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) ["There's got to be more to life than this."](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Get up in the morning, go to school, come home and watch TV,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) go to bed, get up in the morning, go to school, come home, watch TV, go to bed, [go to parties on weekends.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [A lot of people say, "I'm living." No, you're not living -- that's just existing.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[I really think that's there's this inner desire.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I do believe what Chris said. I believe that you're not an accident.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Your parents may or may not have planned you, but I believe God did.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I think there are accidental parents, there's no doubt about that.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I don't think there are accidental kids.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[And I think you matter.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I think you matter to God, I think you matter to history,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I think you matter to this universe.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And I think that the difference between what I call the survival level of living, the success level of living](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [and the significant level of living is,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [do you figure out, what on Earth am I here for?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[I meet a lot of people who are very smart,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [and say, "But why can't I figure out my problems?"](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And I meet a lot of people who are very successful,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [who say, "Why don't I feel more fulfilled? Why do I feel like a fake?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Why do I feel like I've got to pretend that I'm more than I really am?"](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I think that comes down to this issue of meaning, of significance, of purpose.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I think it comes down to this issue of](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [why am I here? What am I here for? Where am I going?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [These are not religious issues --](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [they're human issues.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[As a teacher, I do see a lot of kooks.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And I have learned that there are kooks in every area of life.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Religion doesn't have a monopoly on that, but there are plenty of religious kooks.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [There are secular kooks, there are smart kooks, dumb kooks.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

**Worldview**

[Everybody's betting their life on something.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [You're betting your life on something --](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [you just better know why you're betting what you're betting on.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [So, everybody's betting their life on something,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [and when I, you know, made a bet, I happened to believe](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [that Jesus was who he said he was.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [But everybody's got -- and I believe in a pluralistic society --](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [everybody's betting on something.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

Teacher, Father, Coach

[And I began to think about what I call the stewardship of affluence](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [and the stewardship of influence.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [So I believe, essentially, that leadership is stewardship.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [That if you are a leader in any area -- in business, in politics, in sports, in art, in academics, in any area --](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [you don't own it,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [you are a steward of it.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [For instance, that's why I believe in protecting the environment.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [This is not my planet. It wasn't mine before I was born.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [It's not going to be mine after I die.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I'm just here for a shore time and then that's it.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[The problem is most people never really think it through.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [They never really -- they never really codify it or qualify it or quantify it,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [and say, "This is what I believe in.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [This is why I believe what I believe."](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I don't personally have enough faith to be an atheist.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [But you may, you may.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Your worldview, though, does determine everything else in your life,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [because it determines your decisions,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [it determines your relationships,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [it determines your level of confidence.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [It determines, really, everything in your life.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [What we believe, obviously -- and you know this -- determines our behavior, and our behavior determines what we become in life.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[So, the good life is not about looking good, feeling good or having the goods, it's about being good and doing good.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Giving your life away.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Significance in life doesn't come from status,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [because you can always find somebody who's got more than you.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [It doesn't come from sex.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [It doesn't come from salary.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [It comes from serving. It is in giving our lives away that we find meaning,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [we find significance.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[There's a chapter in the Bible called Psalm 72,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [and it's Solomon's prayer for more influence.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [When you read this prayer,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [it sounds incredibly selfish, self-centered.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [It sounds like, he says, "God, I want you to make me famous."](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [That's what he prays. He says, "I want you to make me famous.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I want you to spread the fame of my name through every land,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I want you to give me power, I want you to make me famous.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I want you to give me influence." And it just sounds like the most egotistical request you could make](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [if you were going to pray.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Until you read the whole psalm, the whole chapter.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And then he says, "So that the king" --](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [he was the king of Israel at that time at its apex in power --](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) ["so that the king may care for the widow and orphan,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [support depressed, defend the defenseless, care for the sick,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [assist the poor, speak up for the foreigner, those in prison."](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Basically, he's talking about all the marginalized in society.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[And as I read that, I looked at it, and I thought, you know,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [what this is saying is that the purpose of influence is to speak up](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [for those who have no influence.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [The purpose of influence is not to build your ego,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [or your net worth.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And, by the way, your net worth is not the same thing](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [as your self-worth. Your value is not based on your valuables,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [it's based on a whole different set of things.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And so the purpose of influence is to speak up](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [for those who have no influence.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[You know, there's a story in the Bible about Moses.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Whether you believe it's true or not -- it really didn't matter to me.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [But Moses, if you saw the movie, "The Ten Commandments,"](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Moses goes out, and there's this burning bush, and God talks to him.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And God says, "Moses, what's in your hand?"](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I think that's one of the most important questions you'll ever be asked. What's in your hand?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Moses says, "It's a staff.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [It's a shepherd's staff."](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And God says, "Throw it down." And if you saw the movie, you know, he throws it down and it becomes a snake.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And then God says, "Pick it up."](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And he picks it back up again, and it becomes a staff again.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Now, I'm reading this thing, and I'm going, what is that all about?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [OK. What's that all about? Well, I do know a couple of things.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Number one, God never does a miracle to show off.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [It's not just, "Wow, isn't that cool?"](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And, by the way, my God doesn't have to show up on cheese bread.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [You know, if God's going to show up,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [he's not going to show up on cheese bread.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[Second thing is, if God ever asks you a question,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [He already knows the answer.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Obviously, if He's God, then that would mean](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [that when He asks the question, it's for your benefit, not His.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [So, He's going, "What's in your hand?" Now, what was in Moses' hand?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Well, it was a shepherd's staff. Now, follow me on this.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[This staff represented three things about Moses' life.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [First, it represented his identity.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [He was a shepherd. It's the symbol of his own occupation.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I am a shepherd. It's a symbol of his identity, his career, his job.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Second, it's a symbol of not only his identity,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [it's a symbol of his income, because all of his assets are tied up in sheep.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [In those days nobody had bank accounts,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [or American Express cards, or hedge funds.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Your assets are tied up in your flocks.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [So it's a symbol of his identity, and it's a symbol of his income.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And the third thing: it's a symbol of his influence.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [What do you do with a shepherd's staff?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Well, you know, you move sheep from point A to point B with it,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [by hook or by crook. You pull them or you poke them, one or the other.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [So, He's saying, "You're going to lay down your identity.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [What's in your hand? You've got identity, you've got income, you've got influence. What's in your hand?"](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And He's saying, "If you lay it down, I'll make it come alive.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [I'll do some things you could never imagine possible."](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And if you've watched that movie, "Ten Commandments,"](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [all of those big miracles that happen in Egypt](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [are done through this staff.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[What are you doing with what you've been given?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [That, to me, is the primary question about life.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [That, to me, is what being purpose-driven is all about.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [This little cross takes spiritual gifts, heart,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [ability, personality and experiences. These things shape you.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And if you want to know what you ought to be doing with your life,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [you need to look at your shape. What am I wired to do?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Why would God wire you to do something](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [and then not have you do it?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [If you're wired to be an anthropologist, you'll be an anthropologist.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [If you're wired to be an underseas explorer,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [you'll be an undersea explorer.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [If you're wired to make deals, you make deals.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [If you're wired to paint, you paint.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)

[Did you know that God smiles when you be you?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) My kids are young and there are times when [I used to go in and sit on the side of their bed,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [and I used to watch my kids sleep.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And I just watched their little bodies rise and lower, rise and lower.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And I would look at them, this is not an accident. Rise and lower.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [And I got joy out of just watching them sleep.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [Some people have the misguided idea that God only gets excited](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [when you're doing, quote, "spiritual things,"](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [like going to church or helping the poor,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [or, you know, confessing or doing something like that.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [The bottom line is, God gets pleasure watching you be you. Why?](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [He made you. And when you do what you were made to do,](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [He goes, "That's my boy.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [That's my girl.](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) You're using the talent and ability that I gave you." [So my advice to you is, look at what's in your hand --](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [your identity, your influence, your income --](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html) [and say, "It's not about me. It's about making the world a better place."](http://www.ted.com/talks/rick_warren_on_a_life_of_purpose.html)