



Equipping Christians
to live out their unique
God-given purpose

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Bob and Marie Southard

Quite some time ago Bob and Marie Southard, a Willow Creek couple, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary by renewing their vows before family and friends. After the ceremony, the hosts invited the guests to say a few words. Some mentioned how Bob and Marie had faithfully served the Lord for many years. A few people talked about the couple's love for one another. Others thanked the couple for helping them build better marriages by walking with them through difficult times. People laughed; others cried; and everyone rejoiced over two lives so well lived.

Bob and Marie agree that their marriage wasn't always so happy. In fact, Bob admits that he wasted the first 30 years living only for himself. *"No one should waste so many years of marriage,"* Bob said. *"I'd give anything to have those years back again."*

But during the last 30 years, Bob has learned to love Marie unselfishly and unconditionally. It hasn't been easy, but with the Lord's help, he is learning to put Marie's needs above his own and to experience greater intimacy.

Together Bob and Marie share a common calling born out of the scars of their own marriage. They are investing their time, talents, and treasure in teaching couples what God has taught them - how to love one another unconditionally. By focusing their lives on helping others, Bob and Marie are making a significant difference; moreover, they are experiencing a greater sense of fulfillment and fruitfulness themselves.

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