Writing Your Life Purpose and Vision

Every person chooses a purpose for living — either an eternal one or a temporal one. An eternal life purpose expresses the desire to glorify God. The very first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism asks: "What is the chief end of man?" Answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever." It is important to note that there is a difference between a Life Purpose and a Life Vision.

1. ***A Life Purpose answers the question, "Why do I exist?"***
2. ***A Life Vision answers the question, "What am I trying to accomplish?"***

God has uniquely created you. No one has been, or ever will be, just like you. Out of His infinite love for you, He called you to be His son or daughter, made you righteous through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, adopted you into His family, forgave you of all of your sins, gave you the free gift of eternal life.. .and much more! He has given you the absolute best. The question is, " How will you respond?"

God made you for a purpose. There is a reason for your existence, a response for you to make during your brief stay on the earth. As a believer, you are not to fall into the trap that Henry David Thoreau said most people do: "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." No. You are to be about your Lather's business, fulfilling His purposes for His glory.

Consider these Scripture passages:

"Lord I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

"Lord we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

Life Purpose Worksheet

To help you develop your **Life Purpose,** ask yourself the question, *"Why do I exist? "*

Write below what you believe your **Life Purpose** is today:

Now, write what you believe your **Life Purpose** *should* be:

Life Vision Worksheet

Having completed your purpose statement, let's now think about your Life Vision.

A Life Vision is something *big.* It is the picture you have of yourself - what you believe God wants you to be and achieve.

Writing your **Life Vision** will force you to do some careful reflection about who you are, how He has made you, and why you are alive at this time in human history. When you complete it, you will have a clearer vision of your overall reason for living.

Practical Guidelines

1. *Get alone so you can spend time with God in prayer. Seek His face before you write your vision statement.*
2. *Study God's Word so your Life Vision lines up with His revealed will (the Bible).*
3. *Keep your focus broad and general. Later on you will be working on your goals. For now, concentrate on the big picture.*

Use the box below to complete a rough draft of your Life Vision. To help you on your way, consider these three examples:

"To be a mature follower of Christ, a godly husband and father, and a faithful pastor. "

"To know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings as a husband, father and employee. "

"To be a disciple-maker, disciple-trainer and sincere worshiper of God. "

Writing Your Life Mission

As you continue working through the process of ordering or re-ordering your life according to biblical principles, your next challenge is to write your **Life Mission.**

To clarify the terms: purpose, vision, and mission, take a minute to review. Remember, first of all, that a Purpose Statement asks the question, "Why do I exist?" The answer should include bringing glory to God. The Vision Statement asks a totally different question: "What am I trying to accomplish?" Everyone's purpose in life *ought* to be "to glorify God" (having an eternal rather than a temporal purpose); however, your Life Vision is unique to you. *It is the picture you have of yourself - what you believe God wants you to be and to do.*

What is a Life Mission? A life mission answers the question, "How do I plan to accomplish my life vision?"

You may be tempted by this time to think that you do not need to go any further. Your question may sound something like this: "Isn't it sufficient that I have a life purpose and life vision? Do I really need anything more?"

John Haggai addresses this very issue in his excellent book entitled Lead On! Listen, for a moment, to his thoughts on the subject:

> ***"Having a vision is not enough. There must be a commitment to act on the vision. That is called a mission. "***

He then provides an illustration that will probably help you get a handle on the difference between the two. See if this makes sense to you:

"In 1960, President John Kennedy challenged the American people with his dream of an American on the moon by 1970. That was a vision. Almost immediately, the government launched a program designed to accomplish that vision - the Apollo mission. The president communicated his vision to the American people. The people, through the government, then committed to the fulfillment of that vision with a mission. "

Does that help you?

Can you now see that many people have visions for their lives, but not everyone has a mission by which to accomplish their vision and to turn their dreams into reality? Having a Life Mission means a serious commitment has been made to act on the vision.

Here are three examples of a Life Mission:

Example #1

I plan to accomplish my Life Vision of being:

A man passionate for God:

I plan to live a life of passion for God and gripped by His grace by being nourished by the truths of scripture and communing with God in prayer, by viewing life's difficulties as opportunities to exhibit faith in God, and by using my resources to exhibit my love for God.

A godly husband:

I plan to make a godly impact on my wife by leading her in a way that causes her to feel loved, cared for, and beautiful, by praying for her, and by knowing her and being involved with her emotionally, so that she can become the trophy of God's grace that He intends.

A godly father:

I plan to make a godly impact on my child(ren) by knowing them, their points of excellence and temptation, by disciplining them in such a way that they understand God's character, and by praying for them, so that they grow up to love the Lord and feel secure in my love for them.

A faithful member of God's Church:

I plan to make a godly impact on my world by fulfilling my call to the Gospel ministry, by being involved in the lives of those outside the family of God, in order that I may share the love, power, and existence of God with them, and by being involved in the lives of those inside the family of God, in order that I may lead, counsel, and disciple them to live a life that pleases God.

Example #2:

I plan to accomplish my Life Vision of being:

A Christian woman:

I plan to become a mature follower of Christ by commitment to growth through prayer, regular devotional reading, study of the Bible and accountability to put truth into my life with other believers through my Discipleship Team. As a woman of God, I will be aware

of my witness to those in need of a relationship with Christ, both verbally and through life-style.

A godly wife:

I plan to be a helper to my husband by loving and respecting him, and by submitting to his headship in all situations and circumstances. I will help him fulfill his Life Vision by supporting and encouraging his endeavors and praying for and with him on a regular basis.

A godly mother:

I plan to teach and lead my teenage daughters by role model and example and by respecting their individuality in order to shepherd their lives. I will shepherd their lives by loving and respecting their father, by keeping my relationship with Christ as priority, and by leading them to Him as difficulties arise.

A godly homemaker:

I plan to create a home that is a haven from the stresses of the world for my family and friends by keeping order, practicing hospitality, and providing a place of rest and refreshment for them.

Example #3

I plan to accomplish my Life Vision of being:

A mature follower of Christ:

Lord, I desire to be continually growing in my understanding of who You are and my dependence on You! I want to walk in obedience to Your ways out of a love relationship with You knowing that You have my best in mind.

A daughter, sister and aunt:

I plan to be a daughter, sister and aunt that brings honor to my family: Lord, I thank you for a family that is committed to this whole process of sanctification. I desire to bring You greater glory through my interaction with them. This requires spending more time with them, serving them, and involving them in my life. I also desire to be an example and encouragement to my precious niece.

A diligent servant:

I plan to be a diligent servant in the work place: I will exercise discipline in the way I spend my days in order that my work will be productive and pleasing to the Lord. I want

to succeed by serving others and building others up - not just completing my agenda.

A caring friend:

I plan to be a caring friend that radiates the truth and love of Christ to all with whom I come in contact. I want my Life Purpose to be genuine and authentic so that my relationship with Christ is an infectious blessing to those around me.

Life Mission Worksheet

Write your Life Vision statement here in preparation for developing your Life Mission.

What am I trying to accomplish?

My Roles in Life

As you prepare to write your mission, here is a tip to help you get started. ***Look at the roles you have in life and write something about each one of them.*** For instance, if you have a vision for being a certain kind of father or mother (e.g., a godly father or mother), expand on your thoughts in your mission statement.

My Life Mission

How Do I Plan to Accomplish My Life Vision?

How Do I Plan to Accomplish My Life Vision?
(Abbreviated Statement)

Writing Your Life Values and Beliefs

Webster defines value as "the quality of a thing according to which it is thought of as being more or less desirable, useful, estimable, important, etc." The verbal form of the word means "to place a certain estimate of worth on in a scale of values; as, I value health above wealth" (New Twentieth Century Dictionary).

One question can easily cut through to the heart of the meaning of the word value: What is most important to me? When you get up in the morning; when you go about your day; when you are ready to go to bed at night - what has your attention? What do you think about? What motivates you to place one thing, event, or person above another? For whom or what are you willing to sacrifice? Who or what has your heart?

Ultimately, there are only a handful of commitments or values that a person can live by on a regular basis - notice this concept carefully. Sure, it's possible to live by a single value or multiple values for the short run. But no one can live consistently where everything is equally important. That's why we are asking you to focus on the values that are most important to you.

Writing your values can be one of the most fruitful exercises you will ever do in life. For as you reflect on your life in general - your relationship with God, family, neighbors, etc., and the things that are really, really important to you - you are actually beginning to discard those values that no longer have meaning and significance for you. Do you remember Paul's words: "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me" (I Corinthians 13:11). The values that remain through and after the process - if they are based upon God and His Word - form a foundation as firm and strong as any steel and concrete one that is poured for a high-rise office tower. A life built on God-centered values will be a life that will never be shaken.

On the following page is sample list of Life Values with a definition for each life value under the heading. These definitions are defined as Life Beliefs. After reviewing this chart, prayerfully begin the process of writing out your own Life Values and Beliefs by answering the question, "What is most important to me as I seek to accomplish my vision?"

My Life Values and Beliefs

What is most important to me as I seek to accomplish my vision?

Life Values	Life Beliefs
Giving	That giving glorifies God. It is an act of love
Faith	That God really is the only one who is completely trustworthy and I have nothing to lose by trusting Him
Worship	That I am created for the praise of His glory and He is worthy of worship that I can enjoy
Bible	It is the best book and one that I should read daily, meditate on and memorize passages from
Repentance	That I need to identify areas to repent of regularly and if I find myself not repenting, I need to pray for a spirit of repentance
Work	
Possessions	
Disciplemaking	
Prayer	

Writing Your Personal and Family Goals

Moms have "to do" lists, kids have chores, companies have them, even churches have them. Goals. In fact we are a very goal-oriented society. Whether it is to win the Super Bowl, make a sale, issue an IPO, lose some weight, exercise, or get our kids into a good college, we have many goals that we set for ourselves each year with varying degrees of success. Have you ever stopped to consider the goals you have as a family and as an individual? What are the five things you want to accomplish this year, individually and/or as a family?

In this section we want to teach you about goals that matter, in time and eternity and help you to begin the process of developing a list of goals that you and your family can work toward.

Jesus Had Goals

You may be asking if it is biblical, that is, does the Bible command that we do such a thing as have goals? Think for a moment in a broad way about the word of God. God is goal oriented. He creates, He sustains, He redeems all with the goal of the glorification of His person. He seeks glory for Himself in "conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:11-12).

Paul says it well in Galatians 1:4- Jesus "gave Himself for our sins, to rescue us from the present evil age." His goal was to glorify the Father and die on the cross for our sins. And as He was leaving the earth, He gave His disciples a goal, "Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Mathew 28:19)

Developing Personal Goals

The acrostic S.M.A.R.T. has been used to help people remember the qualifications of well-written goals. They are called S.M.A.R.T. goals, in that they are:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Realistic
Time-dated

Before you begin the process of writing your goals, consider the following guidelines to assist you:

- Be wise. Pray for wisdom as you seek to set your goals in accordance with God's will for your life.
- Be specific. Goals should be measurable so you can determine whether or not you are on track.
- Be realistic. Setting unusually high goals can be exciting, but may discourage you in the long run. Establish goals that are challenging, but ones that you can attain with effort and prayer.
- Be faithful. That is, be full of faith. Every goal established should be a faith goal.

The Scriptures tell us that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

- Be patient. You may need some time to accomplish this task of writing your goals; especially if it is the first time you have tried it.
- Be diligent. One of the easiest tasks to postpone or procrastinate is the setting of personal goals. Go at it with a passion, knowing that "if you fail to plan, you can plan to fail."
- Be creative. You may have a tendency to continue doing the same things year after year. Try something new; set a new goal that will challenge you.

Examples of Personal Goals

1. To spend a minimum of _____ hours alone with God per week in personal, private worship.
2. Memorize _____ verses of scripture per month.
3. To maintain my weight at and to exercise _____ times a week.
4. To give _____ % of income to the church and other kingdom causes.
5. Pray with my spouse _____ times per week and have a date night monthly.
6. Have devotions with the family _____ times a week.
7. To start a discipleship team.
8. Go on a short-term mission trip this year.
9. To develop a prayer list of people who are unchurched
10. Share the gospel with _____ people this year.
11. Serve in the church nursery _____ days this year.

Goals, Primary Motivators For Life

Ted Engstrom summarized his thoughts on goal setting in the book Strategy for Living. by saying, "Goals, then, are primary motivators for life. If we understand our goals, we will better understand our life. *If we change our goals, we change our lives*

Remember to be patient. Do not think you can pull this together in an hour. If you are

willing to be patient and remember it is a process, the long-term benefits could be enormous. Once you have your goals listed, you may amend them at any time.

Though this assignment may be difficult for you, be encouraged to follow through until you have completed it. Your labor will not be in vain. Remember: If we change our goals, we change our lives. Use the following page to record your personal goals.

Personal Goals for the Year_____

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Family Goals for the Year _____

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Writing Your Life Schedule

Now it is time to move on to the next step: developing your **Life Schedule.** When we work on our personal schedules, we are recognizing and affirming how valuable and precious time is. God made it clear to us through the Apostle Paul that time is a valuable - perhaps our most valuable - commodity and is to be used wisely: *Be very careful, the, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is* (Ephesians 5:15-16). The New American Standard Bible reads: *Making the most of your time, because the days are evil.* "In the light of the entire context the opportunity referred to is that of showing by means of their life and conduct the power and the glory of the gospel, thus exposing evil, abounding in good works, obtaining assurance of salvation for themselves, strengthening the fellowship, winning the neighbor for Christ, and through it all glorifying God." *The opportunity missed will never return* (William Hendriksen, italics Ephesians and mine). In short, time is too precious to waste and squander.

Careful planning will ensure that we use our time appropriately. Every goal we set must be translated into time. John Alexander, author of Managing Our Work, writes, "To set a goal but allow no time to work toward it is counterproductive. A person's schedule should be congruent with his objectives, goals, and standards." A person may have the most wonderful and awe-inspiring Life Plan, but if he fails to indicate *when* he plans to accomplish his goals, the plan becomes nothing more than a hopeful dream.

In time management, a schedule is nothing more than a time budget. You have been given the same amount of time that every other human being has - 168 hours per week. In this respect, every person is on a level playing field. But not every person uses *wisdom* in budgeting their time. Like preparing a financial budget, your judgment is needed. To say "yes" to a certain time commitment is to say "no" to perhaps 10 other things - and vice versa.

Making an effective and efficient *time budget* (or schedule) will help ensure, with God's blessing, that you will fulfill your *Life Vision and Mission.* To use an old saying, "This is where the rubber meets the road." Show me a person who has a well-thought-out schedule and is attempting to live it each day, and I will show you a person who is on his way to reaching his vision and accomplishing his mission. (Note: If you have written your goals, but cannot find the time for implementation, you should either delete those goals or revise both the goals and your schedule. These goals would be considered "unrealistic" because you will not be able to reach them without the available time. Should you fail to make the necessary changes, you will probably carry a burden of guilt and frustration). Now let's begin to think together about how to schedule your time. Once again, John Alexander provides some very helpful insights for you: "Your plan for a week...consists of two types of entries: those without fixed times and those which are scheduled for specific times."

In the space provided below, make a list of all non-negotiable activities, things you will/must do, and then the list of negotiable activities, things you might do. Rank these unscheduled entries in order of priority. Next, lay out a weekly time budget - a grid in which there are seven vertical columns (one for each day) and several horizontal rows corresponding to hours. Enter into this schematic all of your scheduled events (in specific hour-boxes on specific days). Then proceed to fill in the "open" times by working your way down through the priority listing of unscheduled events."

We have provided two such grids for you on the following pages. Complete the first grid by filling in how you currently spend your time. Complete the second grid as mentioned above. When you have finished filling them in, ask yourself this question:

If Jesus Christ were sitting in the room with me, and I handed Him my schedule, would He approve of the way 1 budgeted my time?

If you are married, ask yourself this additional question:

If my spouse were sitting in the room with me, and I handed him/her my schedule, would he!she approve of the way I budgeted my time?

Non-Negotiable Activities: *(Must Do's)* **Rank Activity**	**Negotiable Activities:** *(Might Do's')* **Rank Activity**

Weekly Schedule

My Current Schedule

Time	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
5:00 a.m.							
6:00 a.m.							
7:00 a.m.							
8:00 a.m.							
9:00 a.m.							
10:00 a.m.							
11:00 a.m.							
12:00 p.m.							
1:00 p.m.							
2:00 p.m.							
3:00 p.m.							
4:00 p.m.							
5:00 p.m.							
6:00 p.m.							
7:00 p.m.							
8:00 p.m.							
9:00 p.m.							
10:00 p.m.							
11:00 p.m.							
12:00 a.m.							

Weekly Schedule

My Desired Schedule

Time	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
5:00 a.m.							
6:00 a.m.							
7:00 a.m.							
8:00 a.m.							
9:00 a.m.							
10:00 a.m.							
11:00 a.m.							
12:00 p.m.							
1:00 p.m.							
2:00 p.m.							
3:00 p.m.							
4:00 p.m.							
5:00 p.m.							
6:00 p.m.							
7:00 p.m.							
8:00 p.m.							
9:00 p.m.							
10:00 p.m.							
11:00 p.m.							
12:00 a.m.							

My Life Plan

My Life Purpose

Why do I exist?

My Life Vision

What am I trying to accomplish?

My Life Mission

How do I plan to accomplish my life vision?

My Life Values and Beliefs

What is most important as I seek to accomplish my vision?

Life Values	Life Beliefs

My Life Goals

What are the five things you want to accomplish individually and as a family in the next year?

Personal Goals for the year_____:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Family Goals for the year_____:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

My Weekly Schedule

Time	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
5:00 a.m.							
6:00 a.m.							
7:00 a.m.							
8:00 a.m.							
9:00 a.m.							
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11:00 p.m.							
12:00 a.m.							