

PERSONAL LIFE STATEMENT

Step 1: Identify a Starting Point

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- What are your current responsibilities?

Step 2: Discern Where God is Leading

- **Write an obituary or retirement speech**
Imagine that your obituary needs to be written. What would you most want included? Alternatively, imagine someone is giving a speech at your retirement party. What would you like him or her to say about you?
- **Answer hard questions**
What three things would you most like to do for God during the next five years? Take it as read that God approves, that your friends will support you, that you have all the necessary resources – and that you are going to succeed.
- **Ask close friends**
What do those who know you best think you should do with your life?

Step 3: Develop a Personal Life Statement

Step 3 builds on the insights gained in steps 1 and 2. A personal life statement (vision statement) identifies where we think God is leading us. Based on prayerful discernment, it provides focus and direction. It acts like a compass

Developing Call

Again and again both the Old and New Testaments show men and women taking time, space and energy to understand and obey God's call on their lives. It might have come at an unexpected time or place, but in so many cases the rest of their life is then marked with trying to move on and understand that call.

Several attitudes and assumptions can hamper a response to God's call. Some may think: 'I shouldn't put myself forward. God would much rather I wait quietly until someone asks me to do something.' This may be more than a sign of false modesty. It may indicate dodgy theology.

God longs for us to hear his call and to receive his gifts. Our response will encourage the church and serve the kingdom. So following God in this way is absolutely not about boosting our own status. It's simply about allowing God's image to be more fully reflected in us and in our lives.

pointing to God's direction for our life, guiding us through the maze of possible choices of how we could spend our time. Developing such a statement takes time – for some it could be as long as six months. That's why this course extends over three terms to give you time for reflection and for talking things through with your mentor.

Guideline 1: Seek it through exercising spiritual disciplines The statement will express God's vision for your life. It's worth taking time to pray and listen so as to become sure that what you hear is what God is saying. Some people find it helpful to set aside time for focused reading and for fasting. As Steven Croft comments, 'In a society which presents many of us with a large range of options for ourselves and our families, developing a personal vision is becoming increasingly important as a tool in charting our way through life's decisions.'

Guideline 2: Sharpen your statement by 'capturing' it in detail Try to become specific. Move from vague thoughts to definite ideas. Make notes, write lists, draw pictures or diagrams – there's no right or wrong method. Talk things over with your mentor or with someone close to you. It's possible that what emerges may have five main areas (they connect with the 'red zone' illustration used in the additional material of this session).

- Physical: how does God want me to take care of my body?
- Spiritual: how is God calling me to grow in my relationship with him?
- Relational: how does God want me to grow in my relationships with others?
- Personal/emotional: what areas of my character does God want to develop in me?
- Occupation/ministry: what does God want me to do in my occupation and in the life of the church?

Guideline 3: Test our call by submitting it to others People who know us can bring a healthy external perspective on God's calling.

Guideline 4: Develop our call through obedience Are we prepared to commit ourselves to this call of God on our lives? It is likely to be costly.

Step 4: Implement Your Personal Life Statement

Having a personal life statement isn't much use unless it helps us to make decisions about how we live! If this is God's call on our lives, we need to obey.

Step 5: Revise your life statement regularly

Discerning God's call is not a once-in-a-lifetime thing. As we learn more about God and ourselves we will discern more fully what he wants us to do. Also, our circumstances change. Thus we return to our life statement to review and revise it so it continues to help us to live according to God's priorities.

Step 1	Identify a starting point.	Start work on these before your next mentor meeting.
Step 2	Discern where God is leading.	
Meet your mentor and discuss where you're up to		
Step 3	Develop a personal life statement.	Start work on step 3 and take a draft version to mentor.
Next Growing Leaders session		
Meet your mentor and talk through your draft PLS. Revise in the light of your discussion.		
Next Growing Leaders session		
Meet your mentor. Take your next version of the PLS and chat through.		
Step 4	Implement a personal life statement.	Start putting it into practice.
Next Growing Leaders session.		
Meet your mentor and talk about how you're implementing it.		
Step 5	Revise your life statement.	Ongoing, perhaps once a year.

Further insights into each of these steps can be found in chapters 4-5 of Growing Leaders. Other resources include: The Purpose-Driven Life, Rick Warren (Zondervan); Living with Purpose, Tom and Christine Sine.