



Purposeful Living

*For we are God's handiwork, created
in Christ Jesus to do good works, which
God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Ephesians 2:10

Introduction

The Purposeful Living process is a structured, biblically grounded approach to discerning God's calling and integrating it into your life.

As a follower of Christ, you want to be faithful to God's leading. But how do you know who God is calling you to be and what God is calling you to do? Purposeful Living is designed to guide you toward Spirit-led answers to these foundational questions.

Through this spiritual process, we pray God will prepare you to live a life:

- Guided by the life and ministry values God shaped within you
- Driven by God's purpose
- Destined to fulfill a unique vision
- Unified around a clear sense of God's calling
- Supported by intentional discipleship and life in community

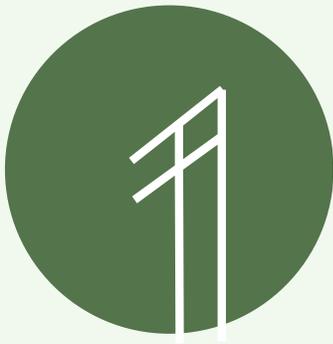
The process breaks down your personal calling into three pieces: your biblical purpose, your core values, and your motivating vision. After you've found your biblical purpose, core values, and motivating vision, you'll combine them to form your personal calling statement.

All the prayer, reflection, conversation, and work you have put into your personal calling statement will only bear fruit if it becomes integrated into your life. The step of integration will help you connect your personal calling statement to the realities of your daily life.

Purposeful Living

Process Outline

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Why am I here?

Roadmap

1. **Reflect on Scripture passages that are important to you.**
2. **Reflect on Bible passages about the identity and purpose of the life of a follower of Jesus.**
3. **Brainstorm your place in God's story.**
4. **Synthesize everything into a biblical purpose statement.**

Supplies

- Bible
- Purposeful Living handbook, journal, or other paper
- Writing utensil

Through Scripture, discover why God created you

You're not a generic member of God's family, interchangeable with anyone else. God has shaped and prepared you to play a unique role in God's world. You have a purpose that will bring glory to God, share the grace of God, and extend the reign of God. In this section, you'll use Scripture to articulate your biblical purpose, a concise statement that explains why God made you.

By explaining the reason for your life, your biblical purpose gives meaning and anchors you. It's also more general than the other parts of the Purposeful Living process. A biblical purpose statement uses your own words to capture God's common purposes for all disciples.

Understanding your purpose starts with Scripture. As Christians, we believe our identity and purpose should always be built upon the solid foundation of what the Bible says about who God intends the people of God to be.

Clarifying your biblical purpose helps you in three important ways:

1. **It declares why God made you.** It captures the heart of why you are on this earth and why Jesus died for you.
2. **It defines your life**—not in terms of what you think but what God thinks. It anchors your life in the character and call of God.
3. **It clarifies the non-negotiables.** It identifies what never changes about who you are, regardless of circumstances.

Here's a four-step process you can follow to find your biblical purpose.



Why am I here?

EXERCISE

Reflect on Bible passages about the purpose of the life of a follower of Jesus.

Read each of the following passages. As you go along, ask yourself: What does this say about the purpose for the life of a follower of Jesus? Jot down some notes for each one.

Genesis 12:1-3

Micah 6:6-8

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Matthew 22:34-40

Isaiah 58:6-12

Matthew 28:18-20



Why am I here?

Luke 9:46-48

Acts 8:26-40

John 13:31-35

Romans 12:1-8

John 15:1-11

2 Corinthians 5:16-20

John 17:20-23

Ephesians 2:8-10



Why am I here?

Philippians 2:1-13

Colossians 3:2-17

Philippians 3:8-14

1 Peter 2:1-3



Why am I here?

EXERCISE

Write your biblical purpose statement.

A biblical purpose statement is a concise statement of why you exist, based on Scripture. This is a chance to dream big, to root your existence in the Triune God and to imagine how your existence might affect others in deep and far-reaching ways.

Before you draft a statement, review your notes from this session. Circle any themes that show up or any insights that you want to include in your purpose statement.

Once you're ready to write your biblical purpose statement, keep these tips in mind:

- Keep it short, 35-50 words max.
- Focus more on “being” than on “doing” (which will be addressed in your vision statement in the next session).
- Use language that grips and energizes you.

A simple format for a biblical purpose statement is: I exist to _____ so that _____.



My biblical purpose statement



Who has God created and shaped me to be?

Roadmap

1. Create a sticky note timeline of your life.
2. Identify the core values reflected in your timeline.

Supplies

- Sticky notes in four colors (we used green, yellow, and blue)
- Writing utensil
- A large sheet of paper (11x17 or larger) to arrange your timeline
- Dot stickers
- Purposeful Living handbook, journal, or other paper

Identify the core values that guide how you live.

The journey of Christian discipleship is a process of **learning to value what God values**. In this section, you'll identify your core values, the priorities that play the biggest role in shaping how you live your life.

These values are important because they offer a clear picture of who you are and what matters most to you. This process will help you figure out what your core values actually are based on the choices you've made and your life experiences. Your actual core values—the values that you consistently demonstrate now—may not be the core values that you want to guide you in the future. But being honest about your current core values will help you know where you need God to help you grow.

What are core values? The priorities that consistently guide how you live and describe what is most important to you. These values are revealed in your behavior. A value that isn't consistently acted upon is just a good intention.

2

Who has God created and shaped me to be?

EXERCISE

Create a sticky note timeline of your life.

Use sticky notes to map out the significant events, people, and circumstances that had an impact on your life and the lessons you learned from them. Then identify the core values reflected in these key lessons.

Capture key life experiences.

1. On yellow sticky notes, briefly describe:



Events that have had an impact on the person you are today (a school incident, family change, move, job, or graduation).



People who have influenced and shaped you (parents, siblings, other family members, teachers, coaches, friends, church members, or spouses).



Significant circumstances that have affected your life direction (your place in your family, where you lived, what your parents did for a living).



Aha! moments—moments of great insight that have influenced the direction your life has taken.

Write only one thing per note, and don't worry about where you place each note on your timeline. Allow your mind to flow and the Holy Spirit to work. Generate as many of these as you can.

2. Mark the sticky notes that describe experiences that were difficult for you with a dot sticker or marker.

Organize your notes.

1. Put all of your notes in chronological order.

Start your timeline in the upper left corner and work down in columns and from left to right. Leave room for a row of sticky notes at the top of your timeline. You might want to leave a blank space every now and then as you will likely add things and move others around.

2. Arrange your notes into “chapters” or eras of your life.

These chapters are often marked by key events or people that helped you move into another phase in your life. Using a blue sticky note, give each chapter a title.

3. Identify significant lessons you have learned in each of the chapters of your life.

Record significant lessons on green sticky notes, and put them in the chapters when those lessons took place.



Who has God created and shaped me to be?

Reflect on your timeline.

Think about what God taught you in each chapter of your life regarding:

- Your character
- Character traits you have come to value
- Your uniqueness as God's creation
- Your effectiveness in serving God

Ponder these questions

What core convictions about people and relationships did God wire into you?

What lessons did God teach you through painful events?

How would you describe your passion for ministry in one word?



Who has God created and shaped me to be?

EXERCISE

Name your core values.

Naming your core values is the first step in discerning your personal calling statement. Our core values are born out of lessons we have learned through experiences—both good and bad—and then built into our lives. Your sticky note timeline will help you to see the way that your life experiences have formed your core values.

Your actual core values might not be the same as your preferred core values right now. That's okay. Our values change as we journey with Jesus; some things we used to value are no longer important or essential, while other things we never valued become highly important to us. This is the result of the transformation process the Holy Spirit empowers in our lives.

How is knowing your core values helpful?

- Core values offer a clear picture of who we are as we live our lives, what priorities will guide us, and who we will be on the journey.
- Core values define what is fundamentally important to us.
- Core values provide guidelines for our choices and actions as we pursue our biblical purpose.
- Core values answer the question “What do I live by, and how?”
- Core values describe how we intend to live, the type of relationships we desire to develop, how we will shape our family life, how we will do our work, and the approach we will take toward the ministry God gives us
- Core values are revealed through our behavior—if they aren't consistently acted upon, they are only good intentions

Find your core values.

1. Review your timeline and ask:

- What key lessons has God been teaching me during different chapters of my life?
- What core convictions do I hold as a result of these lessons?



Who has God created and shaped me to be?

2. Choose eight to ten lessons from your sticky note timeline that had an especially significant impact on you as a person. What conviction do you hold as a result of each of these life lessons? In other words, how did these particular experiences shape what you believe? List your convictions in the first column of the table on the next page.
3. Now distill each of your convictions down to a single word or phrase that captures the value associated with it and write it down in the second column of the table on the next page. This single word or phrase is your core value.

EXAMPLE

Conviction

My ability to influence others is connected to the strength of my relationships.

My family of origin has been God's gift to me, and my family is my primary résumé.

Doing life and work alone proves nothing and is usually less effective

Lifelong learning and a teachable spirit are central to both my growth and my effectiveness.

Value

Relationship

Family

Team

Learning



Who has God created and shaped me to be?

Conviction	Value



What is God preparing me to be and do?

Roadmap

1. Reflect on God's shaping work in your life.
2. Write your motivating vision.

Supplies

- Bible
- Purposeful Living handbook, journal, or other paper
- Writing utensil
- The timeline you created in Section II

Discern the motivating vision God has given for your future.

God has a vision for how you will participate in his kingdom. He has a vision for the person he is shaping you to become. God's vision for our lives should be the heartbeat that pumps through everything we do. But distinguishing God's vision from our own can be a challenge. We all face the temptation to pursue our dreams, call it a vision, and then ask God to bless it.

So how do we know what God's vision is?

First, it's important to remember that discovering God's vision isn't a one-time event. Figuring out who God created you to be and what God is shaping you to do is a lifelong process. God reveals his vision to us over time. And we usually only see part of the vision at first. As you respond to what God shows you and begin to live into God's emerging future, the vision becomes more vivid and real.

Second, you can find clues to God's vision for your future in your past. If you can tune into the person you already are and the things you already love and are doing, you'll have a good start on knowing what God has for your future. God's vision is revealed as you let your life speak. When you listen to your life and what God is saying to you through it, the Holy Spirit will show you what you need to see and understand.

Ultimately, your motivating vision is a picture of the future God desires for you. It's rooted in the mission of Jesus and guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The point of articulating the motivating vision for your life is to help you live it now.



What is God preparing me to be and do?

EXERCISE

Reflect on God’s shaping work in your life.

You can’t use a formula to calculate God’s vision for your life; discerning it takes time and reflection. This exercise will help you listen to your life and discover the future God has been preparing for you.

1. Review your timeline.

God’s vision for your future is often anticipated by your past. Consider how God has worked in your life. Pay attention to:

- The circumstances God used to direct your life (including negative or challenging ones!)
- The people God has used to help you hear God’s call or understand yourself more fully
- The events that became “divine appointments,” through which God shaped who you are and the values you hold

2. Notice themes in your timeline.

As you reflect on your life, you will probably start to see some common threads or patterns, ways God has shaped you for your unique purpose. Once you’ve reviewed your timeline, prayerfully reflect on and respond to these questions:

What are some of the common themes that show up on my timeline?

What do they tell me about God’s work in my life?



What is God preparing me to be and do?

What do they say about the future God has been shaping for me?

3. Reflect on your past.

Think beyond your timeline and complete the following sentences. Not all of the prompts will generate insights. Respond only to the ones that stir something inside of you.

The people and circumstances that have most shaped my life and ministry are ...

The character qualities I most admire and desire for God to shape in me are ...



What is God preparing me to be and do?

People who know me well believe I am most used by God when I ...

Things I have done, experienced, or accomplished that have been satisfying and energizing are ...

If I asked others what they saw in me they would say ...



What is God preparing me to be and do?

4. Dream about your future.

Before you draft your motivating vision, respond to these prompts about your future:

What area of my life or work would I love to focus on?

Though I have often dismissed the thought, there are times I have really felt I should be doing ...

If I knew I could not fail, what would I do in my lifetime for God's glory?



What is God preparing me to be and do?

EXERCISE

Write your motivating vision.

1. Draft your motivating vision.

You've collected a lot of material to weave into your motivating vision. Now's the time to write!

Your motivating vision is a picture of the future God desires for you. Pictures have power because of the way they focus us. The picture needs to be clear, and it must capture what God wants to create through you and be focused on the outcome rather than the process.

If you're wondering how to distinguish between your biblical purpose and your motivating vision, keep these things in mind:

- Purpose clarifies; **vision motivates.**
- Purpose is the reason you live; **vision is the song your heart sings.**
- Purpose gives meaning; **vision prompts action.**
- Purpose uses your own words to capture God's common purposes for all disciples; **vision is specific and unique to you.**
- Purpose anchors you; **vision evokes awe and releases imagination.**

Remember, this vision represents your best understanding to date of God's motivating vision for your life. It isn't the final understanding. You may find a better way to state the vision at a later time. The vision will become clearer as you obey and answer God's call. However, this is the vision God has given you to date. Begin to live it now and trust God to show you more as you are faithful.

For your motivating vision, on the following page write 30 to 50 words that summarize your response to these questions:

- **What is God's vision for my life?**
- **Who is God shaping me to be?**
- **What does God want to accomplish through me?**



What is God preparing me to be and do?

Here are a few sample motivating visions to help you refine what you've written:

"My vision is that people whose lives are limited by poverty, lack of education, or deficient training will experience the love of Jesus through me as I give them employment, encourage their education, and offer them

training so they feel successful and are able to support a family."

"I know God desires to use me to offer our children the spiritual, emotional, relational,

experiential, and financial resources they need to become disciples, grow in faith, answer God's call, and make their own unique contributions as adults."

"I know God has placed me as a public school teacher so I can be a source of light to others and I can offer my students a chance at a better life."

"God has given me a vision for a family that loves God and models a genuine, believable faith in our neighborhood and community. My role is to help my wife discover her own unique calling and grow in her effectiveness and to build up and empower my children to make their faith their own."

"God has given me a vision to build a congregation passionately committed to the goal of reproduction of disciples, leaders, groups, ministries, and sites. My role is to model reproduction and make it the highest possible priority in my ministry."

Write your revised motivating vision below.

My motivating vision



What is God's personal calling for me?

Roadmap

1. Read the personal calling statement examples.
2. Write a first draft of your personal calling statement.
3. Test and revise your personal calling statement.

Supplies

- Writing utensil
- Purposeful Living handbook, journal, or other paper

Write a statement that captures who God is calling you to be and to do.

The work you have done in identifying your biblical purpose, core values, and motivating vision has prepared you to write your **personal calling statement**.

Your personal calling statement describes why you exist, who God has shaped you to be, and what God is preparing for you to accomplish. This holistic statement is your best understanding to date of God's calling for you.

Over time, you'll refine and refocus your personal calling statement by following God's call in how you live. Your personal calling statement will become an increasingly unique document, reflecting your style, gifts, passions, growing insights, and perspectives.

Your personal calling statement is a dynamic guide. It is not a taskmaster. It is a compass to guide you into the future.

Three key benefits of a personal calling statement:

Direction: A personal calling statement offers a focused path. Sometimes just having a clearer sense of where you are going provides much-needed encouragement and the ability to persevere.

Decision-making: It provides you with a tool to use when deciding whether to say yes or no as you assess opportunities to serve and lead.

Fulfillment: It gives you a greater sense of personal destiny and a better idea of your own contribution to the work God is doing around you. In the demands of daily living, it is easy to lose sight of the big picture. Your personal calling statement is your much-needed reminder.



What is God's personal calling for me?

EXERCISE

Write your personal calling statement

1. Read some examples of personal calling statements.

Below are three personal calling statements. Each weaves together all three elements—purpose, values, and vision. One is more values-driven, another is more vision-driven, and the third is more purpose-driven.

A businessperson's values-driven calling statement:

My mission is to give my life away for others. I will give my life away:

- to my family, who need me to be a woman of integrity, compassion, and faith.
- to fellow believers, with whom I am called to a life of accountability.
- to work associates, who read my life more than they listen to the words I say.
- to my business—my mission field—where I integrate my faith and life and impact lives.
- to personal, business, and community relationships.
- to my world, whose problems are immense but in whose solutions God wants me to play a part.

A church worker's vision-driven calling statement:

I live to glorify my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through personal worship and inner life growth, through a lifestyle that displays grace and truth, and by joining God in loving, winning, and developing new believers who will lead the advancement of the church.

As a result of my calling and my own unique giftedness, I have committed my life to raising a family that loves God and models a genuine, authentic, believable faith. I desire to intentionally help my wife discover her place in ministry and grow in her effectiveness and to spend time building up, encouraging, and empowering my children.

I dedicate myself to extending the reign of God through refocusing mission-based, Christ-centered local churches and developing relational support systems that will mentor and empower a new generation of church leadership. In the end, I desire to impact 1,000 churches and 1,000 leaders into the 21st century.

A homemaker's purpose-driven calling statement:

My personal mission is to be a living example of Christ's love, power, and grace, bringing hope, encouragement, and joy to this generation, beginning with my husband and family. I have been called and gifted to love and serve others.

I dedicate myself to:

- be in God's Word daily, listening in prayer, responding in worship, and applying what I am learning.
- serve my family, team, and church in prayer and with encouragement, ideas, and support in their tasks and their lives.
- help women discover their unique calling and encourage them to grow and mentor other women in a holistic manner.
- build bridges to my neighbors in order to expose them to the life and hope that is found in Jesus.
- pray for this valley, that God's purposes may be fulfilled.



How do I use my personal calling statement?

Roadmap

1. Reflect on who you are.
2. Connect your roles to your calling.
3. Make a plan for living out your personal calling.

Supplies

- Purposeful Living handbook, journal, or other paper
- Writing utensil
- The timeline you created in Section II

Integrate your personal calling statement into your life.

All the prayer, reflection, conversation, and work you have put into your personal calling statement will only bear fruit if it becomes integrated into your life. As important as this work is and can be, it can easily become a casualty of more urgent (but not necessarily more important) concerns.

The key to building your personal calling statement into your life is to understand the roles you fulfill—in other words, the assignments God has given to you and that you have accepted at this time in your life. Each of these assignments helps you faithfully live out your baptismal identity and fulfill your primary vocation as a disciple of Jesus.

The step of integration is designed to help you navigate life and connect your personal calling statement to the realities of your daily life. It will help you find a rhythm between what your vision calls you to do and who God calls you to be.

The goal is to help you enjoy and be fully present in each moment while also staying focused on your mission, vision, values, and purpose—to live in the present while moving into the future.



How do I use my personal calling statement?

EXERCISE

Reflect on who you are.

1. Consider how God has wired you.

You've done a lot of reflecting through the Purposeful Living process, but you're not done yet. Now that you've identified the *what* (your personal calling), you need to figure out the *how*. God has wired you with particular personality traits, skills, inclinations, and ways of being in the world.

Who you are will shape how you live out your personal calling, so spend time answering these questions:

What natural abilities have I received? For example, am I creative, artistic, sensitive, empathetic, analytical, responsible, or persuasive?

What skills have I acquired and developed? For example, can I teach, manage, design, consult, care, nurture, listen, counsel, coach, decide, or lead?

What are my spiritual gifts?



How do I use my personal calling statement?

What do I know about my personality or work style from an inventory like Myers-Briggs, DiSC, CliftonStrengths, or the Enneagram?

How is it that I grow spiritually?

What practices or disciplines bring me closer to God?

When I feel most fully alive in Christ, what am I doing or experiencing?



How do I use my personal calling statement?

2. Identify your current roles.

Each of us plays many roles or has accepted many God-given assignments. These might be roles you have in your community or family. They might express what you do, whether that's in an unpaid vocation or a paid job.

Examples include:

- | | | | |
|-------------|---------|-----------|--------------|
| Friend | Parent | Teacher | Team player |
| Citizen | Sibling | Employee | Craftsperson |
| Intercessor | Child | Catalyst | Boss |
| Mentor | Spouse | Innovator | |

Reflect on your life, and list 10 to 15 roles God has given you.

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How do I use my personal calling statement?

EXERCISE

Connect your roles to your calling.

This exercise will help you figure out how to apply your personal calling statement to your most significant roles.

Instructions:

1. Review your list of roles. Which of them are most significant? Which “assignments” do you sense God calling you to fulfill right now? Circle the top three to six roles.
2. Now review your personal calling statement.
3. List the roles you circled in the space below.
4. Write a brief description of each role, tying it to your personal calling statement. How will you follow God’s call on your life in that role? How will you inhabit that role in a way that’s faithful to the person God is calling you to be and the things he is calling you to do?

Role	How this role fulfills my personal calling statement



How do I use my personal calling statement?

2. Identify people to help you stay faithful to God's calling in your life.

Creative and consistent commitment to God's call requires the help of others. There's no such thing as a lone Christian! You were baptized into the body of Christ. This part of the exercise will help you identify people who can support you as you follow God's call.

1. First, make a list of past mentors, spiritual directors, and friends who have significantly influenced you. This list will not only provide encouragement, it will also help you identify the type of relationships you need at this stage in your life.
2. Next to each person on your list, identify the type of relationship they had with you and the contribution they made to your life and growth.

Person	Type and significance of relationship



How do I use my personal calling statement?

Once you've done that, reflect on those relationships. Ask yourself:

What types of relationships has God used to nurture my growth?

What types of relationships are missing?

Would a spiritual director, mentor, or counselor be helpful?

As I continue my journey of purposeful living, who else can help me?

Now identify two or three people who can help you follow God's call. These might be people who are already on your list, or they might be people whose support you want to seek out. Commit to reaching out to these people in the next week to let them know that you've worked through the Purposeful Living process and want their help in living it out.

Congratulations!

By working through the Purposeful Living process, you have taken one more step in your ongoing personal renewal.

- You have a better understanding of how God has shaped your life.
- You have a personal calling statement that will help you live more intentionally as a disciple of Jesus Christ and as a leader.
- You have a plan to continue to grow, develop, and serve as the person God designed you to be.

As a result of this process you will be better able to live a life:

- Guided by the life and ministry values God has formed in you.
- Motivated by God's purpose for you.
- Destined to fulfill the unique vision God has for you.

But remember—the Purposeful Living process is about more than just you. The ultimate purpose for engaging in this process is to invest your life in such a way that lives are transformed and the world around you is more gracious, merciful, and just.

Because you have been personally renewed and become more purposeful through this process, you are now better equipped to help your church and other disciples of Christ around you:

- **Develop a clear sense of identity** as a people called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to follow Christ in mission.
- **Minister out of a clear and compelling vision**, become motivated by a powerful biblical mission, and be guided by deeply held core values.
- **Grow deeper in their love of God and wider in their love of one another** and of the people among whom God has called them to serve.
- **Nurture a missional mindset** that contributes to a healthier and more just community.
- **Refuse to play it safe or to do business as usual**, and instead long to give their lives away as they make a difference in the world.
- **Be more faithful and more fruitful** as they multiply new disciples, new mission, new ministries, new worship services, and new congregations.

You and your church will do all of this because you believe that you—along with all disciples of Jesus Christ—are called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the very presence of Jesus Christ in this lost and broken world so loved by God. Let the adventure continue!