

Writing a Life Purpose Statement

By Steven Stuckey and James Choung

A **Life Purpose Statement** is the result of an ongoing discovery process that explores the two questions: Who are you and Why are you here. The discipline involves prayer, reflection, writing, and rewriting to achieve a statement that is concise, inspirational, and progressively true to our identity and call. The discernment process helps us to live more integrated and focused lives.

A Life Purpose Statement assumes that God's perspective on my identity and his purposes for me in his world is the best starting point for my discovery process. It speaks of central values in my life, the things I hold dear. It reflects on my relationships with God and with others. It is a tool for us to explore what we personally mean when we seek to, "Love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and our neighbor as ourselves."

Writing a Life Purpose Statement requires time for reflection and personal inventory.

A life purpose statement needs to be clear, concise and easy to follow. Laurie Beth Jones says that a good life purpose statement "should be no more than a sentence long, able to be understood by a twelve year old, and able to be recited by memory at gun point."¹ Don't worry about getting it to one sentence, however on your first couple of drafts.

Here are some samples:

To become a voice for those who have no voice and to bring glimpses of God's kingdom into peoples lives. Tom and Christine Sine

To become a woman who helps reclaim the land and rebuild the broken walls of the lives of the men and women God sends my way. Maureen

To become a fruitful follower of Jesus who experiences the love, joy and beauty of the Father, Son and Spirit and helps other individuals cultivate the soil of their life so they might become mature plants in the garden of the Lord. Steve Stuckey

Use the **Know Yourself Worksheet** as a means to understand more of yourself. Take the first hour to thoughtfully answer the questions. Do this on your own. It's important that you develop answers that reflect your own heart and mind and not another's.

During the second hour, begin to work on the **Life Purpose Statement Worksheet**. Remember that you may not complete a Life Purpose Statement the first time through the worksheet. Our Life Purpose Statements are a work in progress, enabling us to continually think about where we are going with God and who we are becoming.

As you finish both worksheets, try putting into one or two paragraphs what you believe you Life Purposes to be. Be ready to share that with the group.

¹ Laurie Beth Jones, *The Path: Creating Your Missions Statement for Life and Work* (New York: Hyperion, 1996), page 3

Know Yourself Worksheet

James Choung and Steven Stuckey

"The place where God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." — Frederick Buechner

1. Gifts and Abilities

List your abilities and gifts. What do you do that gives you energy? What do the people around you think are your gifts and abilities?

2. Personality and Temperament

What words would you use to describe yourself? What environment do you function best in? (Ex. pace, indoors or outdoors, with people or not, kinds of tasks, structured or spontaneous)

3. Longings and Dreams

What do you want to do with your life? Do you have a life dream? What motivates you? Is there a passage of Scripture or Biblical character that speaks to your heart?

4. The World's Needs

Of the needs of the world around you, what stands out as important? What do you like to do to make a difference?

5. Relationship with God

What kind of relationship with God would you like to experience? Is there a Biblical passage that speaks to you about the kind of relationship you seek? What image do you have of God? What metaphor would you use to describe him?

Life Purpose Statement Worksheet

1. Write a paragraph describing the relationship that you think God is calling you to have with himself (Ex. You might begin by saying, "I want to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. That means the following to me..")

2. Describe the quality of relationships that you want to have with other people. You might want to describe the good behaviors that you would like to have be a part of those relationships as well as the bad behaviors that you want to avoid. Think specifically about the people in your life as you complete this paragraph.

3. In the last paragraph, describe the steps would you like to take to further your vocational call.