



a leader's

life purpose

CALLING AND DESTINY DISCOVERY TOOLS FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE COACHING



HANDBOOK

TONY STOLTZFUS



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Self-Study Schedule and Exercise List

This schedule is included in the *Workbook* as a self study guide. The Core Exercises in the left column plus chapter reading are the suggested starting point for that area. The “Optional Exercises” column on the right provides additional options if the client gets stuck, plus ways to go deeper and increase self-understanding in that area. You can also use the Baseline Assessments (1.1) to determine which areas need work, and then allow the client to work through core and optional exercises as needed.

Note that while the four baseline exercises are associated with the corresponding sections in this *Handbook*, all four are found in chapter one of the *Workbook*. The *Handbook* also includes additional exercises (such as 6.4) designed for the coach.

Lesson	Core Exercises	Optional Exercises	Pg.
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	2.2: Structuring for Eternal Rewards		37
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Chapter 3-4	4.1: Allegiance Checkup		70
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		<i>5.3: Strengths Behind Successes</i>	91
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		<i>8.4: Envisioning Your Dream</i>	140
	8.5: Dream Themes		141
Chapter 9	9.1: Identifying Obstacles		158
		<i>9.2: Regrets</i>	159



Lesson	Core Exercises	Optional Exercises	Pg.
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Introduction

“When you start out on the journey you think it is all about taking in experiences to fulfill yourself. But it’s not. The greatest experience is changing someone else’s experience of life. And once you come to that realization, it becomes your foundation, the ace in your pocket, who you are... When you see the world through the lens of others, that’s when you find yourself.”

Andre Agassi, tennis champion, in *Sports Illustrated*

A committed young missionary wanted help figuring out his life purpose. Over the weeks we’d been together he’d poured out his heart to me. We talked about his dreams for starting a ministry center as well as the disappointment of losing his support, his relational challenges with other missionaries, the passion he had for reaching youth and the times he’d chafed under controlling leaders. “So,” I finally offered, “Let me sum up our conversation. I’m hearing that you really feel called to ministry; you just don’t want to get hurt anymore.”

“Yeah, that’s about it,” he replied.

After a moment’s reflection, I asked, “Think about Jesus’ life for a second. He was betrayed by one of His inner circle, abandoned by His best friends and tortured to death in the process of living out His life purpose. How will you become like Him if you never get hurt? And how will you ever really know Him if your life is nothing like His?” That rocked him back a bit.

For the few remaining moments we had together, we reflected on the story of Jesus’ life, pondering how the fellowship of His sufferings is inextricably linked with the power of His resurrection. That conversation transformed this young man’s expectations about his vocation.

That coaching encounter started me thinking down the road that led to this



book. Most of the life purpose tools I'd used were geared toward helping people look inside, discover their design, passion and abilities, and then pursue them. But it didn't seem like that kind of process would have ever led Jesus to His agonizing choice in the Garden, where He groaned, "If there is any way to get out of this awful death, that's what I want. But this isn't about me: I'm going to do what *you* want no matter what." The life purpose tools I was familiar with simply couldn't stretch far enough to discover a destiny like Jesus'. And if the way we do destiny discovery doesn't work with Jesus' life, then something is missing.

I believe that missing piece is "calling": *an external commission from God for the sake of others*. Since it is an external commission, it's found by revelation, not by looking inside. Since it is for others, it can lead us to do things that don't result in

*Calling is an External
Commission from God
for the sake of others.*

fulfillment or happiness for ourselves, at least in this life. And it rests on the foundation of Allegiance: you answer a call from God because you have pledged your life to His service. The concepts of Calling and Allegiance give us a way to integrate biblical ideas like suffering and sacrifice into life purpose—ideas that are missing from most popular approaches.

There are several reasons why coaches seem to shy away from talking about calling. One is that calling has gotten a bad rap: for many Christians, the image they have of calling is God ordering them out of the blue to do something they don't want. "*Commit yourself to celibacy, take up your Cross, and become a missionary to Outer Berzerkistan.*" In high school, I remember wondering if God wanted me to kneel down in the halls of the high school and pray (about the most embarrassing thing I could think of) or marry a girl I wasn't attracted to. When you don't know God deeply, you still think He uses you like a tool instead of loving you as a son or daughter. In that mind set, calling is a life sentence of indentured servitude instead of a partnership with your first love that brings you into who you were created to be. No wonder we don't want to look for it!

The second reason calling isn't a big part of our vocabulary is that most destiny discovery tools coaches use originated in the secular arena. In American culture, the idea that living your destiny involves obeying an external commission isn't part of the plan! Instead, the focus is on finding what our own internal compass says we can do with fulfillment and excellence. When these life purpose tools migrated into the ministry world, the underlying view of destiny discovery as an individual, internal process came with them. When we fail to root out this unbiblical approach, Christian life purpose becomes about the King's kids walking in all the blessings of health, wealth and fulfillment God wants to give them in this life. Paul would be appalled.

That's why it is vital that we rediscover calling as part of life purpose. As Christians, our purpose is woven into the fabric of the purposes of God for all of creation. Purpose is implanted in us as well as revealed to us—we were made for what God calls us to be. So a balanced, biblical approach to destiny discovery looks in four directions:

- **Outward** at what God reveals to us (the external *Call*)



- **Inward** at what our *Design* reveals within us
- **Backward** at how he has purposefully *Prepared* us through our life experiences
- **Forward** at the dreams and *Passions* that draw us to our future destiny

Objectives

My overarching purpose in writing this suite of books is to help us as a Christian coaching movement develop a balanced, biblically-grounded approach to discovering a Christian's life purpose. As such, I'm going to focus on what's unique about being a *Christian* life coach who is coaching other believers toward their destiny. Certainly, almost everything here can be used in coaching non-Christians also. But instead of starting with secular coaching principles and adapting them for ministry, we'll begin with what Scripture says about a Christian's life purpose and develop a coaching structure that fits around that.

My second objective is to put in one place a complete suite of destiny discovery tools designed for Christian life coaching. These tools can be used with clients, to run life purpose discovery classes or to train others in life coaching skills. I've also included the specialized set of tools I use to coach mature leaders toward entering their convergent destiny roles. Organizational leaders have unique questions to answer when it comes to purpose—like influence style, team or sphere of influence—and since I work mostly with leaders, these are tools I utilize frequently.

These two objectives define the two sections of this *Handbook*. Section one covers the underlying philosophy of Christian life coaching, what on-purpose living looks like, and how suffering, success and significance fit in with purpose. Section two offers a comprehensive suite of life purpose discovery tools, structured around a five-part life purpose model that integrates *Calling* and *Allegiance* with *Passion*, *Preparation* and *Design* to create a fully rounded picture of a Christian's life purpose.

I've presented the most-used discovery tools in an exercise format. Much of the time I coach these informally, but it is handy to have a tool or worksheet you can just hand to clients so they can keep working between appointments. The exercises reside at the end of each chapter, numbered *chapter.x*. So exercise 5.1 is located at the end of chapter five.

Companion Volumes

These same exercises also appear in *A Leader's Life Purpose Workbook*, a companion volume designed to be used by life coaching clients or in destiny discovery classes and workshops. It includes all the tools in the *Handbook*, a chapter on Christian life purpose and descriptions of each of the main discovery areas. When clients purchase the *Workbook*, they'll be able to do any of the exercises while you'll have an

Objectives

1. Present a biblical framework for Christian life coaching
 2. Offer a set of life purpose discovery tools
 3. Add a set of discovery tools for organizational leaders
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