

# Christian Life Coaching 101

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This course is designed to provide an overview of the growing field of life coaching. Individuals will discover foundational principles of coaching, learn how to start a coaching business, and explore practical and scriptural aspects of Christian coaching.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to

- Define Christian life coaching.
- Understand the differences between coaching, counseling, training, consulting, and mentoring
- Understand the role of a Christian coach in the life of the believer.
- Know how to get started as a Christian coach

In the last 10-15 years, the field of life coaching has significantly exploded. It has emerged as a new profession that has given people who don't require counseling an opportunity to seek an alternate kind of professional (a life coach) to help accomplish important life goals. The significant thing about life coaching, which is considered a helping profession is that individuals in other helping professions such as medical, clergy, counseling, education is now incorporating life coaching into their area of expertise.

## Origins of Life Coaching

Some undoubtedly believe that life coaching, as an approach, has its roots in ancient Greece and the Socratic method. However, as a profession, it started in the late eighties by Thomas Leonard, an American financial planner. Leonard is typically regarded as the father of professional life coaching. He established the first coaching school in 1991 and founded the International Coach Federation. (ICF) in 1994. The ICF is presently the most recognized accreditation and credentialing body for life coaches worldwide. On the other hand, others will argue that life coaching does not have a beginning and cannot be said to be invented or founded by one person alone. Currently, the field of life coaching is unregulated. It has neither federal nor state regulation, and there is no

licensing agency either that provides oversight for the coaching profession. However, you do have credentialing and coaching organizations like the International Coach Federation that typically provides some level of supervision or regulation for the profession. Until such a time that the life coaching field becomes regulated, anyone with little or no formal training can become a life coach.

### **The Future of Life Coaching**

The future of coaching is promising. Studies show that the overall market is forecasted to grow sustainably at a 5.4% average annual pace, to \$1.38 billion by 2022. Life coaching has been undoubtedly the second-fastest growing industry in the world for over 10 consecutive years, behind the information technology field, according to [realbusiness.co.uk](http://realbusiness.co.uk). The personal development industry is currently worth \$11.6bn and is expected to rise at a staggering rate of 6% per annum.

(<https://coachestrainingblog.com/becomeacoach/size-of-the-life-coachingmarket/>).

### **Christian Life Coaching: Definition**

The International Coach Federation (ICF) defines coaching as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential." Life coaching is for those who are emotionally and mentally healthy but ready to grow.

Christian Life Coaching is one of the numerous niches within the life coaching field. This niche approaches coaching from a Christian perspective, empowering individuals to produce extraordinary results in their personal lives, ministries, secular careers, and academics. Some of the concepts behind Christian life coaching are biblical. We are called to "encourage one another and build each other up" (1Thessalonians 5:11). We see Paul exhorting believers to live holy lives. We are told to "carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). The Christian life coach comes alongside the clients inviting God into the coaching relationship to help steer them from where they are to where God desires them to be in their life's journey.

According to the Christian Coaches Network International (CCNI), the following is what sets Christian life coaching apart from secular life coaching:

Christian coaching is being able to:

- invite the Holy Spirit into the conversation in a three-way partnership
- let the Holy Spirit direct the coaching conversation
- directly ask questions pertaining to the integration of faith
- encourage the client to consider God's will and plan
- allow the expression of the client's faith to grow
- challenge the client to view life from a biblical perspective
- foster awareness, create actions and put together solutions using scriptural references,
- encourage the client's transformation more into the image of Christ.

### **The Role of Christian Life Coaches**

A Christian life coach is someone firmly grounded in the teachings of the Bible who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, guides the individual into becoming all that God has designed for him or her to be. The life coach assists the individual to:

- Get fresh perspectives on personal challenges and opportunities.
- Stay on the right track to accomplishing one's desired goals.
- Stay accountable
- Deepen the individual's walk with the Lord
- Demolish mindsets that are holding the individual back from fulfilling your divine purpose
- Utilize effective tools that will help them be successful in both their personal and professional lives (i.e. relationships, finances, spiritual, career/vocation etc.).

□ Use the teachings/sermons heard in a typical Sunday or Mid-week service and successfully apply it to their daily lives. The desired outcome will be a healthy and fulfilling relationship with God and others.

### **The Differences Between Coaching, Counseling, Consulting and Mentoring**

How is Life Coaching different from all other helping professions? Let us look at a few of them as described by the International Coach Federation. (ICF)

Professional coaching focuses on setting goals, creating outcomes, and managing personal change. Sometimes it's helpful to understand coaching by distinguishing it from other personal or organizational support professions.

Therapy/Counseling: Therapy deals with alleviating pain, dysfunction, and conflict within an individual or in relationships. The focus is frequently on resolving difficulties arising from the past that hamper an individual's emotional functioning in the present, improving overall psychological functioning, and dealing with the present in more emotionally healthy ways. Coaching, on the other hand, supports personal and professional growth based on self-initiated change in pursuit of specific actionable outcomes. These outcomes are linked to personal or professional success. Coaching is future focused.

While positive emotions may be a logical outcome of coaching, the primary focus is on creating actionable strategies for achieving specific goals in one's work or personal life. The emphases in a coaching relationship are on action, accountability, and follow through.

Consulting: Individuals or organizations retain consultants for their expertise. While consulting approaches vary widely, the assumption is the consultant will diagnose problems and prescribe and, sometimes, implement solutions. With coaching, the assumption is that individuals or teams can generate their own solutions,

with the coach supplying supportive, discovery-based approaches and frameworks.

Mentoring: A mentor is an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Mentoring may include advising, counseling and coaching. The coaching process does not include advising or counseling and focuses instead on individuals or groups setting and achieving their own objectives.

Training: Training programs are based on objectives set out by the trainer or instructor. Though objectives are clarified in the coaching process, they are set by the individual or team being coached, with guidance provided by the coach. Training also assumes a linear learning path that coincides with an established curriculum. Coaching is less linear without a set curriculum.

## **How to Get Started as a Christian Life Coach**

Now that you know what the field of life coaching is, and how it has proven to be successful within Christianity, if interested in pursuing this wonderful career opportunity, here is some information to get you started.

### *1. Training/Education*

Some will argue you do not require any training, just your desire to help people and your life experiences is enough. I disagree with that argument. If we require our therapists, counselors, or other practitioners to have some level of education, why not our life coaches. Regrettably, since the coaching field is unregulated, you tend to encounter many people claiming to be coaches with no form of formal or specialized training. For you to be an effective Christian life coach, it is important to obtain the necessary coaching skills, techniques, and

tools to help your clients. Check out the International Coach Federation (ICF) or the International Christian Coaching Association (ICCA) to obtain information in Christian coach training and certification.

## *2. Find Your Specialty/Niche*

Many life coaches today are generalists; however, you have the option to narrow it to two or more niches. What do I mean by this? Christian Life Coach is a niche within the field of life coaching. And so, you will want to ensure that you have the skills and tools that you need to serve your clients within this niche. For example, in Christian coaching, your targeted clients will be “Christian” (the community of believers), your local church, etc. In addition to being a Christian coach, you have the option of selecting other specialties you feel comfortable with (i.e. have relevant experience, skills, training). So, if for example, you are a Mental Health Therapist, you may want to specialize in Mental health coaching, relationship coaching, health & wellness coaching, etc.

## *3. Marketing Yourself*

So, with this field, you have the option of working for yourself (entrepreneur) or working for an organization such as a church organization, nonprofit agency, hospital, etc. If you decide to start your own coaching business, then advertising your product which is coaching is especially important. In this age of digital technology, it has become simpler and cost effective to advertise. Thanks to social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Other ways to market yourself is through the local churches and non-profit organizations in the community. In addition, there is the library, Christian bookstore, barber shop and beauty salons, etc. The list is endless. Through your local church or community center, you can offer coaching information sessions where you can share more about, who you are what services you offer and what Christian coaching can do for people.

For more information on how to get started as a Christian life coach, you can check out this article <https://coachestrainingblog.com/becomeacoach/sixessential-tips-on-how-to-start-a-christian-life-coaching-business/> or visit the ICF's website <https://coachfederation.org/>

### **The Christian Life Coach's Clients**

So, you are now a Christian Life Coach, who is your client base going to be?

The clients of Christian coaches are mostly believers, the Christian community.

From time to time, you will have a handful of non-Christians seeking services. The coach does not have to reject them as clients, but instead be sincere with them about your belief system and perspective as a Christian. If they are comfortable with that, then good for them. For such individuals, the coach can give them the opportunity during a session to surrender their life to Christ. Let the Christian coach do his or her part and let the Holy Spirit do the rest!

*The Coach's client base may include:*

- One on one individuals (Christian and non-Christian, as mentioned earlier).
- Faith based organizations
- Nonprofit secular organizations and agencies.
- Hospitals,
- Rehabilitation Centers
- Educational Institutions
- Homeless Shelters

*In Conclusion...*

The field of life coaching is advancing rapidly. Many people around the world can attest to the success of life coaching in their lives; they have witnessed transformations in their personal and professional lives. Within the body of Christ, there is a tremendous need for Christian coaches.

Christians are called to excellence in life and ministry. 1Timothy 4:12b says. “but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and purity.” Life coaching provides a framework to assess, develop and grow these key areas. The independent perspective and direct approach from a Christian life coach will allow the individual to eliminate blind spots and receive expert spiritual counsel, direction, and encouragement.

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