

Christian Life Coaching BLC 102

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This advanced course is designed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the life coaching field. Students of this course will discover what it takes to be a successful Christian Life Coach in Christian ministry.

Upon completion of this course, you will learn:

- The Coaching Core Competencies
- Principles of Effective Biblical Life Coaching
- Ethical Guidelines and Professional Standards in Coaching
- The Different Coaching Specialties
- Biblical Life Coaching and The Church
- Helpful Resources For Your Coaching Ministry or Business.

In Christian Life Coaching 101, we provided an overview of life coaching and how it differs from other helping professions such as counseling and mentoring. We discussed the role of a Christian Life Coaches within the Christian community and more. This course will focus on what it takes to succeed in the ministry of Christian/Biblical life coaching.

Please note: The term “Christian Life Coaching” and “Christian Life Coach” is used interchangeably with Biblical Life Coaching” and “Biblical Life Coach”. It means the same thing in the context of this study guide and course material. In addition, Biblical or Christian Life Coaches are often called Christian Coaches as well.

Understanding The Coaching Core Competencies

Core Competencies as Defined by the ICF

In 1998, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) established eleven core coaching competencies developed to support a broader understanding of the skills and approaches used within today’s coaching profession. They also supported coaches in standardizing the level of alignment between the coach-specific training expected and

the training they have experienced. The Core Competencies were grouped into four clusters according to those that fit together logically based on common ways of looking at the competencies in each group. In 2019, the core competencies were updated. They were no longer eleven competencies but eight but still categorized into four clusters. In summary, these coaching competencies helped coaches maintain a high level of professional and ethical standards in their businesses and ministries.

Below are the newly updated ICF core competencies.

A. Foundation

1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice

Definition: Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching.

1. Demonstrates personal integrity and honesty in interactions with clients, sponsors, and relevant stakeholders.
2. Is sensitive to clients' identity, environment, experiences, values, and beliefs
3. Uses language appropriate and respectful to clients, sponsors, and relevant stakeholders.
4. Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the Core Values.
5. Maintains confidentiality with client information per stakeholder agreements and pertinent laws.
6. Maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy, and other support professions.
7. Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate.

2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset

Definition: Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible, and client-centered.

1. Acknowledges that clients are responsible for their own choices.
2. Engages in ongoing learning and development as a coach.
3. Develops an ongoing reflective practice to enhance one's coaching.
4. Remains aware of and open to the influence of context and culture on self and others.
5. Uses awareness of self and one's intuition to benefit clients.
6. Develops and maintains the ability to regulate one's emotions.
7. Mentally and emotionally prepares for sessions.

8. Seeks help from outside sources when necessary.

B. Co-Creating the Relationship

3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements

Definition: Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship, process, plans and goals. Establishes agreements for the overall coaching engagement as well as those for each coaching session.

1. Explains what coaching is and is not and describes the process to the client and relevant stakeholders.
2. Reaches agreement about what is and is not appropriate in the relationship, what is and is not being offered, and the responsibilities of the client and relevant stakeholders.
3. Reaches agreement about the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship such as logistics, fees, scheduling, duration, termination, confidentiality, and inclusion of others.
4. Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to establish an overall coaching plan and goals.
5. Partners with the client to determine client-coach compatibility.
6. Partners with the client to identify or reconfirm what they want to accomplish in the session.
7. Partners with the client to define what the client believes they need to address or resolve to achieve what they want to accomplish in the session.
8. Partners with the client to define or reconfirm measures of success for what the client wants to accomplish in the coaching engagement or individual session.
9. Partners with the client to manage the time and focus of the session.
10. Continues coaching in the direction of the client's desired outcome unless the client indicates otherwise.
11. Partners with the client to end the coaching relationship in a way that honors the experience.

4. Cultivates Trust and Safety

Definition: Partners with the client to create a safe, supportive environment that allows the client to share freely. Maintains a relationship of mutual respect and trust.

1. Seeks to understand the client within their context which may include their identity, environment, experiences, values, and beliefs.

2. Demonstrates respect for the client's identity, perceptions, style, and language and adapts one's coaching to the client.
3. Acknowledges and respects the client's unique talents, insights, and work in the coaching process.
4. Shows support, empathy, and concern for the client.
5. Acknowledges and supports the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs, and suggestions.
6. Demonstrates openness and transparency as a way to display vulnerability and build trust with the client.

5. Maintains Presence

Definition: Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded, and confident

1. Remains focused, observant, empathetic and responsive to the client
2. Demonstrates curiosity during the coaching process.
3. Manages one's emotions to stay present with the client.
4. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the coaching process.
5. Is comfortable working in a space of not knowing.
6. Creates or allows space for silence, pause or reflection.

C. Communicating Effectively

6. Listens Actively

Definition: Focuses on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support client self-expression.

1. Considers the client's context, identity, environment, experiences, values, and beliefs to enhance understanding of what the client is communicating.
2. Reflects or summarizes what the client communicated to ensure clarity and understanding.
3. Recognizes and inquires when there is more to what the client is communicating.
4. Notices, acknowledges, and explores the client's emotions, energy shifts, non-verbal cues, or other behaviors.

5. Integrates the client's words, tone of voice and body language to determine the full meaning of what is being communicated.
6. Notices trends in the client's behaviors and emotions across sessions to discern themes and patterns.

7. Evokes Awareness

Definition: Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor, or analogy.

1. Considers client experience when deciding what might be most useful
2. Challenges the client as a way to evoke awareness or insight.
3. Asks questions about the client, such as their way of thinking, values, needs, wants and beliefs.
4. Asks questions that help the client explore beyond current thinking.
5. Invites the client to share more about their experience in the moment.
6. Notices what is working to enhance client progress.
7. Adjusts the coaching approach in response to the client's needs
8. Helps the client identify factors that influence current and future patterns of behavior, thinking or emotion.
9. Invites the client to generate ideas about how they can move forward and what they are willing or able to do
10. Supports the client in reframing perspectives.
11. Shares observations, insights, and feelings, without attachment, that have the potential to create new learning for the client.

D. Cultivating Learning and Growth

8. Facilitates Client Growth

Definition: Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action.

Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.

1. Works with the client to integrate new awareness, insight or learning into their worldview and behaviors.
2. Partners with the client to design goals, actions and accountability measures that integrate and expand new learning.

3. Acknowledges and supports client autonomy in the design of goals, actions, and methods of accountability.
4. Supports the client in identifying potential results or learning from identified action steps.
5. Invites the client to consider how to move forward, including resources, support, and potential barriers.
6. Partners with the client to summarize learning and insight within or between sessions.
7. Celebrates the client's progress and successes.
8. Partners with the client to close the session.

Principles of Effective Biblical Life Coaching

Becoming an effective biblical life coach starts with putting on the following traits or qualities.

First of all, one must be born again, Christian and a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, like any believer, the coach must put on the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23, followed by humility, respectful and the person must be coachable. One might ask, what does coachable mean? As a biblical life coach, one must be motivated by the goal of improving one's practice or ministry. Coachable means being ready to accept constructive criticism from others and allow feedback on one's performance. The coach must be humble enough, patient enough to make any corrections, ready to make the necessary changes to improve for those being served. With all these qualities mentioned in this paragraph, you will be able to be used by the Holy Spirit to help transform the lives of your coachees (church members, clients, ministry workers.).

Essential Coaching Skills and Mindset

You might have the passion, training, or expertise to become a life coach. However, without the intervention of the Holy Spirit, the qualities noted in the above paragraph, and the right coaching skills, you are going to struggle in your coaching ministry or practice. It's like an individual trained as a teacher but does not know how to relate with their students. The individual doesn't have the patience, communication skills, and listening skills to meet their students. Still, they possess the education and desire to teach.

It will be a struggle for that individual to succeed in the teaching or education profession. So, it is with a biblical life coach. Biblical coaches must possess a coaching mindset and the essential skills to coach and impact the lives of their coachees.

The coaching mindset has to do with having the right thought pattern and the proper way of thinking to assist your patients or clients effectively. When you adopt the appropriate attitude, you will be suited to offer others the guidance needed to resolve their problems and achieve their goals.

There are eight essential coaching skills to have as a biblical life coach. They are:

1. **Building Trust-** The foundation of every relationship, be it personal or professional is trust. To enjoy a satisfactory and productive relationship, trust must be established. Without some level of trust, conducting an effective life coaching session is impossible. Your coachees/clients need to develop trust that you are here to help them succeed in their objectives and nothing else.
2. **Active Listening** - One of the essential coaching skills that every life coach must have to be successful is active listening. It is a skill that enables your clients to trust you and have confidence in your ability to help them achieve their desired goals. It requires constant practice, and it can be developed over time. Characteristics of active listening include Focusing on all words and actions (paying attention to the speaker's total communication, including body language.), fully comprehending all that was said or disclosed—processing all information. Being able to closely repeat back what was said (this signifies you were listening)—doing your best to listen being empathetic to the speaker's feelings and thoughts. An example that shows one is listening attentively is the coach may nod to show they are interested. They agree with the speaker's statement, or they may use words like "What I hear you say is ..." to be sure that they have understood the message.
3. **Powerful Questioning** – Asking open-ended relevant questions, which typically starts with What, Why, or How, supports a client in accessing knowledge and creative possibilities in their life. Open-ended questions cannot be answered with simple yes, no, or other one-word answers. When you use open-ended questions, life coaches create an opportunity for coachees to discuss and reflect on their goals or challenges- rather than merely agreeing (or disagreeing) with the coach. Examples of powerful questioning are What are your short and long-term goals? What

do you feel is holding you back from achieving your goal(s)?, How do you hope you can accomplish these goals?

4. **Be Empathetic** – Showing empathy is one of the best skills you can have as a biblical life coach. It shows your Christ-like behavior, compassion and understanding of their situation, and willingness to help. Coaches are trained to be empathetic but practical. You can be compassionate while at the same time maintaining the appropriate boundaries in the process. When I say appropriate boundaries, I mean allowing the Holy Spirit to guide your steps so that you do not do something that may be misconstrued, especially in a situation where a male life coach is coaching a female coachee. That is why it is not wise and recommended to coach and serve individuals of the opposite sex.
5. **Flexibility** – Every good coach must be flexible with their time. You must be ready to adapt to the schedule and style of your coachees. Doing this shows that you are making yourself available and doing what is needed within boundaries to those that you serve to ensure that they are moving closer to their goals.
6. **Encouragement** – Like motivation, encouragement is also very crucial to the coaching relationship. People want to be encouraged; they want to know they have a coach who can offer empathetic words that will lift their spirits when things do not seem to be working the way they expected. Words that motivate can instill confidence in your clients. Here are some verses in scripture to encourage your coachees 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Timothy 4:7-9, Matthew 11:28-29, Isaiah 40:29-31, Proverbs 17:22, Psalm 28:7
7. **Provide Feedback** – As coaches, you work with individuals towards accomplishing their goals or objectives; providing feedback to your coachees is essential. It enables you and them to stay on course. It is a time when you check in to ensure they are on the right track. Give them a chance to ask questions and try recognizing their efforts.
8. **Accountability** – This is probably the most crucial aspect of what coaching provides and what is needed to ensure a successful coaching experience for everyone involved. Accountability drives accomplishments; it acknowledges all efforts and progress made by the individual.

Ethical And Professional Standards in Coaching

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) established a Code of Ethics. It was defined as guiding moral principles underlying how coaches behave congruently with ICF's core values of integrity, excellence, collaboration, and respect.

As Life Coaches, you are expected to conduct yourselves ethically and professionally with clients/coachees and others. The International Coaching Federation has this listed in its Core competencies, Competency #1 demonstrating ethical practice. Regardless of the profession or vocation one is in, whether secular or non-secular, meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards is essential in the way clients are serviced, especially in countries like the United States. Abiding by the ICF Code of Ethics and adhering to guidelines and professional standards within a business's or association's scope of practice will enable providers of services like coaching professionals to accomplish their work with minimal room for errors.

Professional Standards For All Biblical Life Coaches includes the following:

- Being committed to live the tenets of their faith and willing to coach individuals who respect their christian/biblical approach to coaching.
- Familiarizing yourself with and also understand the laws and regulations in your profession and area of expertise
- Demonstrating integrity at all times.
- Maintaining a strict level of privacy and confidentiality with all your coachees' information. You must store and dispose of any records, including electronic files and communications, created during my coaching engagements in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security, and privacy and complies with any applicable laws and agreements.
- Creating a safe and supportive environment for the individuals you serve.
- Ensuring that the client fully understands the terms of the coaching relationship.
- Setting boundaries with your coachees and others you associate with often.

JRNI Coaching, an ICF approved training provider states “ The role of the ICF will become increasingly important to the coaching industry as more businesses and individual consumers seek to hire coaching professionals.” This statement merely means that coaching professionals at some point in the near future will be placed on the same level with therapists, counselors, and other providers whose services are recognized as a crucial health & wellness need thereby causing insurance companies

and others to pay close attention and accept payment for such services. At this time, insurance providers in the United States do not reimburse or pay for coaching services.

Types of Specialties/Niches

In the last two decades, the life coaching profession has experienced a rapid surge due to the growing demand for coaching services by large corporations, the health & wellness industry, and others. It is the fastest-growing profession in the U.S., second only to Information Technology. As a result of this sudden rise, the need to specialize in specific areas was realized. It was discovered that to serve one's clients better, it would be best to become a specialist instead of a coaching generalist. Narrowing down to one or two specialties for one's coaching business or practice will be more rewarding for both the coaching client and the coach. The coaching industry, primarily due to the current climate we are in, i.e., the COVID-19 pandemic, will continue to grow because the demand for coaching services is only going to accelerate.

Let us take a look at a few of the most popular life coaching specialties today (niches) :

1. **Career Coaching:** Career coaching helps individuals identify their career goals, develop a strategy with action steps to reach those goals, and provide accountability as they move along the path to achieving their desired goals. These coaches help people find fulfillment in their careers by establishing professional goals, creating a plan and overcoming obstacles.
2. **Relationship Coaching** - is a niche of life coaching that helps people find fulfillment in their personal and work relationships. It involves collaborating with your coachees to identify tools and mindset shifts to improve the most critical connections in their lives. The goal of relationship coaching is to help people develop healthier and more satisfying relationships of all kinds: marriages, parents, and their young or adult children, healthier interacting within work teams, friends, and relatives.
3. **Wellness Coaching:** There is a growing need for Wellness Coaches. These professionals collaborate with their clients to find the motivation and resources needed to attain their physical and emotional health goals.

4. **Health and Fitness Coaching:** This is another specialty of life coaching in great demand as more people are becoming conscious of their overall health & wellbeing. People are living longer, and so the need to maintain a healthy and satisfying lifestyle is increasing. Health & fitness coaching takes a holistic approach to help clients develop tools to improve their bodies through exercise, proper diet, and healthy decision-making.
5. **Money Mindset Coaching:** This niche of coaching focuses on improving the financial status of personal or business clients and changing mindsets on how money is perceived and creating a more effective relationship to money to fulfill their financial goals. Money mindset coaches help clients develop the skills needed to help them make better sense of their finances.
6. **Christian Life Coaching** – This faith-based Coaching approaches coaching from a Christian perspective. Coaches coming alongside the clients inviting the Lord into the coaching relationship to help steer them from where they are to where God desires them to be in their life's journey. The Christian Life Coach's role is to equip the clients with a plan to discover their purpose, break down negative mindsets holding them back and become everything God destined for them to be.
7. **Executive Coaching:** This niche of life coaching focuses more on business entities. It involves a mutually designed relationship between executives or business leaders within an organization. Benefits of executive coaching include better work-life balance in the workplace, improved productivity, and leadership development.
8. **Marital Coaching:** Marital or marriage coaching is a subset of Relationship coaching, a life coaching specialization. It is a coaching niche that focuses primarily on the future of the marriage relationship. It is an excellent niche for pastors, spiritual leaders, and those already involved in some degree of counseling within church ministry.
9. **Sales Coaching** – This specialty of life coaching helps promotes the advancement of sales representatives in an organization. These coaches collaborate with account (sales) reps to build their sales teams. Sales coaches allow the client to assess their own style, apply the sales techniques that feel right for them, and bring the discipline and implementation skills necessary to achieve their goals.

Other life coaching niches/specialties include business coaching, grief coaching, success coaching, lifestyle coaching, ADHD coaching, Mental health coaching, and spirituality coaching (not the same as Christian coaching).

Biblical Life Coaching and Church Ministry

As mentioned in our Christian Life Coaching 101 course, Christians (believers) are the primary clients of biblical life coaches. Believers are the number one focus of every individual who coach from a biblical worldview or perspective.

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Within the body of Christ, there is a dire need for Christian/ Biblical Life Coaches. Just like the lay counselor, pastoral counselor, Sunday school teacher, and other workers within the church organization, there is the need for a Life Coach. You can choose to work independently of any particular church denomination since it is not a regulated field at the moment, unlike professional counseling. Several coaches are self-employed (independent) and, therefore, like any Christian or secular business, will charge for their services. However, whether as a business a coach decides to charge a fee or not for its services, it is strongly recommended to seek spiritual covering like your local church, your pastor, or a para-church Christian ministry or association. Doing that will help you stay accountable to others in your ministry. Suppose you decide to serve within the confines of your home church denomination or ministry. In that case, that ministry automatically becomes your spiritual covering because they have employed you as a worker within their organization and will decide if your role is a volunteer-based or fee-based one.

How Can Christian/Biblical Life Coaches Serve The Church?

When I say how can Christian coaches serve the “*Church*”? I am referring here to Christian men and women (18 and over) who live and work within their communities worldwide. Within the body of Christ, coaches are providing coaching, counseling, encouragement, and biblical guidance to individuals facing challenges in their personal and professional lives.

Here are some ways that Christian life coaching is beneficial to the body of Christ:

- Pastors and Ministry leaders work with coaches to improve time management and organization and strengthen their leadership abilities.
- Individuals work with coaches to help them pursue career goals, business goals, help prepare for life after work (retirement).

- It helps Individuals facing challenges such as homelessness, domestic violence, marital issues work with Christian life coaches to help them work through the difficult places in their lives. Coaching guides them into setting realistic goals that will get them out of their current predicament into a better outcome. Life coaching from a biblical perspective encourages individuals to develop strategies for overcoming obstacles and achieving their desired goals.
- It helps individuals use the teachings from a Sunday or Mid-week service and effectively apply it to their daily lives. The desired outcome will be a healthy and fulfilling relationship with God and others.
- It effectively helps church leaders and their congregations with evangelism, discipleship, active prayer/intercession ministry, and direction in discovering their calling and the practical application of their spiritual gifts and abilities.
- The role of Christian Life coaching in the body of Christ is necessary and vital to fulfilling the plan of God for men and women of faith who decide to fulfil God's purpose for their lives. Through this type of coaching, church ministry, and other faith organization's leaders, workers and volunteers can live the vision that God has given to His people. As they work together with one purpose, focused on Christ, He will provide what is needed to accomplish the goals.

Helpful Resources For Your Coaching Ministry or Business

Like any other career or profession, there are valuable resources that you will need to have in your toolkit or library to help grow your coaching ministry or business. A few well-known ones have been provided below.

1. *Coaching skills Checklist* – Is a guide to ensure that coaches are staying on track, asking themselves relevant questions like did I open with a word of prayer, did I apply the appropriate scripture verse to the situation? did I listen actively when spoken to? Many times, without a checklist or guide, essential points are missed, and so designing and having a coaching skill will assist you in staying on track and ensuring that you do not omit anything relevant.
2. *A Coaching Plan* - A coaching plan helps maintain and record a coach's sessions' progress. This plan can also be useful for interaction between coaches and their coachees to assist them

in creating and accepting the basic framework of the coaching process.

3. *Life Coaching Exercises* – They are practical tasks used to help individuals (coachees) to reflect on, learn about themselves, and identify actions for specific goals they want to achieve. Examples of life coaching exercises can be seen here <http://www.davidbonham-carter.com/life-coaching-exercises.html>
4. *Coaching skills inventory*– is a great assessment tool by HRDQ used to assess life coaches coaching strengths and weaknesses. It helps one improve on their effectiveness as a biblical life coach and business owner.
5. *The Wheel of Life* – is an excellent coaching tool that helps individuals visualize all the critical areas of their lives at once. Life coaches and career coaches frequently use this self-assessment tool to present their coachees with an up-close view of their lives.
6. *Life Harmony Assessment* - help coaches jumpstart the coaching process and make it exclusively client-focused. Check out more information on the Christian Coach Institute's website. <https://www.christiancoachinstitute.com/life-coaching-tools-and-resources/life-coaching-assessment-tool/>.
7. *VIA Inventory of Strengths (Seligman)* -The Values in Action Inventory of Strengths, or VIA-IS, is an assessment tool examining a person's values through the lens of their character strengths.
8. *The Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI)* – This assessment measures emotional and social competence based on completed questionnaires from the individual and responses they receive from others. Clients can choose to nominate family members, friends, coworkers, etc. they interact with regularly to provide these responses. The assessment takes about 30 to 45 minutes to complete.

There are also great books and literature available on major book retailers like the ones noted below that biblical life coaches help enhance your skills and help you grow into the coach that God wants you to be for your clients.

Christian Coaching, Second Edition: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality by Gary Collins. Dr. Collins offers biblical principles, and practical tools to enhance your coaching skills.

Coaching Questions: A Coach's Guide to Powerful Asking Skills by Tony Stoltzfus — The single most important skill in coaching is asking powerful questions.

Christ-Centered Coaching (2006) by Jane Criswell This book will introduce you to seven coaching approaches, which also serve as seven mental models or attitudes of a coach.

Conclusion

The role of biblical life coaches is an impactful one. It is a ministry that, together with the intervention of the Holy Spirit, the coaching mindset, tools, skills, and coach training received can powerfully impact the lives of children of God, taking them where they are now to where God desires them to be in their life's journey. In Biblical/Christian Life coaching, coaches use most of the skills, principles, and strategies of professional coaching but apply them through the lens of Scripture and within a distinctly Christian worldview.