



## THE VOCATION STATEMENT & PROGRAM OF LIFE

What is the most important focus in my life? Do I really set my priorities or do I have them set for me? Here you need to write out your vocation statement. This has to reflect what God has created for you. That by which he will judge you. The Vocation statement reflects what the key to fulfilling your life is. It should become a compass that affects everything in your life, the goals you set, the decisions you make, the paradigms you hold, and the way you spend your time.

How would God write out your job description as a baptized person, as a spouse, as a parent, as an apostle? What is your IDEAL for all these jobs? What are the essential elements involved in completing these roles? This should be a description of an ideal and not just a list of things you need to do. Who are you? Who is God calling you to be in these areas?

IN the last 30 years, there has been wide spread confusion about what it means to be a spouse and a parent with disastrous results. We need to redefine these roles and recapture their importance. The same can be said about our relationship with God. Until we realize what God is calling us to we can never fully appreciate our faith and the gifts that God is giving us.

It is also imperative that we have real balance in our life. If we ignore any one of our responsibilities to the detriment of the others, we are not living a holy life. A spouse that ignores his/her spouse for the sake of their children will ultimately harm the children. We need to constantly review our ideals, goals and responsibilities to make sure that we are not neglecting anything that is truly essential.

First we start with God:

That which defines me first: Baptized child of God, His masterpiece

My principle vocation: Spouse/Single person...

Principle responsibility: Parent/Apostle

After you have written a Vocation Statement be sure to establish two or three concrete means to help you accomplish it. They should be things you can do on a regular basis. Make sure that they are concrete and practical.



## SAMPLE VOCATION STATEMENT

### **Baptized Catholic**

I have been created to enter into a personal, passionate and intimate relationship with God. All that I do and say has to reflect the dignity to which I am called. I am totally dependent on God for my own happiness and the happiness of those around me. Without God I can do nothing of any significance. He has made me and remade me, giving me the dignity of a prince/princess. With His sacraments I am full of grace. He has given me the same mission that Christ had: the glorification of the Father and helping to save souls.

1. I will make daily prayer commitments and do them at the best time of the day.
2. I will attend regular spiritual direction, for which I have prepared in advance.

### **Spouse**

As a spouse I am called to make my husband/wife the center of my heart. Understanding just how much we need each other, I will strive to build him/her up, to make my spouse feel loved and to recognize his/her needs and do all that I can do to fulfill them. I will complete myself in my spouse and see our relationship as the generator of our love for our children. I will see Christ in my spouse and accept him/her as he is.

1. I will give my spouse the first 15 minutes when I get home from work.
2. I will make Thursday evening "date night".
3. I will think about the needs of my spouse on my way home from work.

### **Parent**

As a parent I will recognize that God has placed me here on earth to form and mold the hearts, minds and souls of our children. I will make them feel loved and cherished and always be conscious of my calling to be a faithful reflection of God the Father's love for them.

1. Try to spend at least ten minutes alone with each child each day.
2. See my vocation as much more than doing things for my children. It has to be loving them and making them feel love by spending quality time with them.
3. I will help Gertrude with her Math homework every night.

### **Apostle**

As a Baptized Catholic I will understand my vocation to be an apostle. I will recognize the needs of the universal body of Christ and never be indifferent. I will see my faith as the greatest gift that I can give to anyone. I will not see people superficially but try to penetrate into their soul and guide them little by little to Christ.

1. I will try to help my brother Bob come back to the faith. I will remember him every day in my prayers and sacrifices and really show him extra love.
2. I will volunteer at Birthright three hours every week.
3. I will be faithful to all of my responsibilities as a parishioner.



## VOCATION STATEMENT

**Baptized Catholic:**

**Spouse / Single:**

**Parent:**

**Apostle:**



## PROGRAM OF LIFE

To create your Program of Life, it will help to follow these steps:

### **1. ANALYSIS AND DEFINITION OF SELF.**

Set aside a time to reflect on yourself. Examine the real root of your sins and shortcomings. If you are doing spiritual exercises and elect to make a general confession you can list all your major sins of your past life and then examine them to discover the root of each one. Usually a pattern occurs. You will find in this analysis that the obstacles or negative manifestations are chiefly the result of one of three dominant passions we all have: PRIDE, VANITY, and SENSUALITY.

Each dominant passion is a **tendency** or **inclination** in us to turn in on ourselves. It is a real obstacle for us to be Christ centered. It makes us feel insecure and have us look for our security in ourselves, others or things. This passion is a habit and goes very deep even though we do not recognize its influence over so many of our actions.

This root sin affects my intellect, my heart and my will. Every time I give into it, it affects the way that I think, the desires of my heart, and the power of my will. This has left scars in me that needs to be healed.

So that you'll better recognize these three passions, below we'll mention some of their most common manifestations:

A. **PRIDE** . When we base our security and self-esteem on ourselves. Manifestations:

1. **Always proving oneself**- Driven to accomplish goals. This forms who I am. Never being satisfied with doing enough. Having higher expectations of myself than God does. Not accepting myself as I am. Putting my self-esteem in my work and accomplishments
2. **Control**- problems with trusting others, even God. Feels threatened if not in control because it could cause failure. Trying to control others (Kids, spouse) and not accepting them as they are. Difficulty in delegating. Impatience in others.
3. **Independence**- Not wanting to depend on anyone, they might let me down. Not depending on God through prayer. When things get busy, prayer is the first to go.
4. **Rationalization**- we become the criteria for right and wrong. We are never wrong. Don't accept thinks through faith. I need always to see them.
5. **Judgmental**- we are critical of others especially when we are mad at ourselves. We don't want others to be better than ourselves. We put a mask on and have a false elevated idea of ourselves.
6. **Self-pity**- getting down when I am not perfect or I fail in anything. How could I have???



B. **VANITY.** Putting our security in others. (In what they think of us.)

Manifestations:

1. Looking for approval, affirmation, admiration, in other people. Not necessarily in everyone but principally in those who are closest to me.
2. Fear of rejection from our peers. Having human respect effect the things I do or say or don't say.
3. Wanting others to admire me. Talking about myself and my accomplishments
4. Going against my principals in order to fit in and be accepted.
5. Falling into impurity in order to feel loved.

C. **SENSUALITY.** Putting our security and self-esteem in things. Seeking instant gratification.

Manifestations:

1. **FEELINGS AS KING.** Giving primacy to my feelings such that my daily work depends upon my emotional state- whether I feel like it, whether I like the person I'm dealing with, if I like my task Avoiding service when I don't feel good; always accomplishing my responsibilities at the last minute just to finish them, without concern for perfection in what I do; wasting time easily, and when I'm not under deadline, working only on what I like most; fleeing anything which exacts a bodily mortification of me; complaining about everything; if I'm a little under the weather, everyone knows about it.

2. **MATERIALISM.** Always wanting the newest, the most up to date item on the market; never wanting to throw anything out; being attached to any personal possession; excessive worry about things and about money. To NEED THINGS to feel good about oneself; excessive time shopping at the mall, especially when I am down.

3. **LIFE OF PLEASURE.**

- Comfort. Always looking for the most comfortable, that which requires least effort, the easiest for me, the most comfortable postures;
- Escapism. Daydreaming, not controlling my thoughts; constructing castles in the air in which generally I play heroine or center.
- Food. Not controlling my appetite, overeating at meals, eating only what I like.
- Misuse of TV, Movies, Alcohol, Internet.
- Impurity, looking at sex only for selfish pleasure.

2. **LIST THE MOST IMPORTANT AND PREVALENT CONCRETE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE ROOT SIN.**

This should **only** refer to the root sin and only the one root sin you have chosen. It is important to focus in on one and work only on one at a time. The more concrete the manifestations, the clearer the enemy becomes so that you can be more focused on eliminating it. You should list no more than five or six primary manifestations.

### 3. CHOOSE AN OPPOSITE VIRTUE

The Spiritual life has to be based on a positive striving for virtue. It cannot remain on a level of, “just saying no” to our weakness, but has to be turned into “saying yes” to Jesus in the living of virtue. A virtue is more than just a habit. It is a positive inclination or tendency that affects the intellect, heart and the will and helps us to center ourselves on Christ. We do not seek virtue for the sake of virtue but to free ourselves from our root sin. Virtue should ultimately heal my intellect, heart and will and develop an opposite way of thinking, attaching my heart to the things that are from “above” and strengthening our will.

If my root sin causes me to center myself inwardly the virtue has to be geared to do the opposite: center myself on the person of Christ. We do not form virtue just for the sake of virtue but to enable us to be free from sin and imperfection and to facilitate union with Christ. So the virtue of patience is not just about not exploding but is all about being in control to see all from Christ point of view and accepting what I need to accept, in other words, becoming more like Christ.

Write out a paragraph describing what your root sin is in your own words. What are the essential elements? Where does it come from? Then write out a paragraph of what is the opposite of this. What virtue closest comes to this paragraph?

This virtue will become the central focus of all your spiritual life. Here are some examples of opposite virtues:

**PRIDE:** Humility, Simplicity, Supernatural Spirit, Meekness, Compassion, Docility, Serviciality, Dependence on God through prayer.

**VANITY:** Purity of intention, Love for Christ, Seeing Christ in others, True acceptance of Oneself, Purity.

**SENSUALITY:** Discipline for love of Christ, Focus on the person of Christ, Abnegation and self-denial for love of Christ, Hope, Spirit of loving sacrifice, Patience, Purity.

### 4. CHOOSE “CONCRETE” MEANS TO OBTAIN THIS VIRTUE.

This **is not about resolving individual situations** but is about forming a virtue. The means to obtain the virtue has to change the way I think, it has to change my heart and it has to change my will.

**Intellect-** The way that I think and perspective of how I habitually see things.

**Heart-** The good that the heart goes after that ultimately becomes the goal of my action. The heart gives me the motivations that I need to accomplish my goal. The clearer my goals the easier it is to practice the virtue. If patience is my virtue and I am trying to practice it with my kids I need to have the good I am looking for as doing what is best for them which translates into the goal of forming them and seeing every situation as an opportunity for formation.

**Will-** Puts actions into reality. But my will cannot just act alone. I will do X, Y or Z just because I will to do so. This is white knuckling and is very ineffective. The will needs to be enlightened by the intellect and fueled by the heart.

**God-** God sends his Holy Spirit to enlighten the Intellect, inflames the heart with the right goals and motivations and strengthens the will to put into the virtue into action.

Understanding all of this we need to come up with 5 or 6 concrete MEANS TO OBTAIN this virtue. These means should help me live the virtue and not just to resolve a situation. Be aware that this virtue is habit that is not only formed through the repetition of single acts that become second nature to the person. For it to truly become deep it must change the way we think, change our heart and strengthen our will.

If a person is working on patience, the more acts of patience they make the easier it is to be patient in difficult circumstances. But it is not enough just to say, I will be patient when my kids scream. That will only last a very limited time. But to say, "I will practice patience when my kids scream understanding that there is nothing more important for me to see these as occasions as formation moments and will put what I am doing aside to deal lovingly with them."

What can I do on a daily or weekly basis to form this virtue in my soul? The first two or three means should be prayer and the sacraments. The others can be gotten by applying the virtue to your vocation statement: How can I live this virtue in my life as a spouse, as a parent, at work, in my apostolate. Again it is vital to be as concrete as possible so as to have the goal you have set out to achieve as clear and well defined as possible. It should be something that you can use at night for your conscience exam as a guide of what God was asking from you.

## 5. DEFINE THE IDEAL I'M GOING TO STRIVE TO IMITATE.

Your IDEAL will always be Jesus Christ because the aim of the program of life is to transform yourself into Him. Nonetheless, **based on the virtue** you most need, choose some aspect of the personality of Jesus Christ as your ideal. How does Christ live out this virtue? It will help to choose as well a motto, which is to say a phrase that speaks to me and helps me to remember my virtue.



## USE OF YOUR PROGRAM

**1. Base your conscience exam on your new program.**

Go over the means that I have in place to obtain my virtue. Have I practiced them or not? Why or Why not?

**2. Base my confession on my program.**

“Fr. I am struggling with the sin of ... and this is how it has been manifesting itself in the past two weeks.”

**3. Base my spiritual direction on my program of life.**

**4. Focus the fruits of my meditation on the virtue that I am trying to live.**

**5. Try to go over it briefly every day!**





**ROUGH DRAFT OF OUTLINE FOR THE PROGRAM OF LIFE**

IDEAL-

MOTTO-

OBSTACLES- Root sin:

Manifestations of root sin:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

PROGRAM- Opposite virtue:

Means to form this virtue:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



**OUTLINE FOR THE PROGRAM OF LIFE**

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## EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS OF LIFE

IDEAL- Christ seeing all from the perspective of his Father.

MOTTO- Jesus meek and humble of heart

OBSTACLES- Root sin: **PRIDE**

Manifestations of root sin:

1. Being critical. (especially of my spouse when he...)
2. Not listening to people. Trying to convince them that I am always right.  
Especially with my mother in law.
3. Not being consistent in saying my prayers. Not "feeling a need" to pray.
4. Always rationalizing. Making excuses for myself. Especially at work.  
Not accepting things by faith alone.
5. Not being sensitive to the needs of others. Especially not having patience  
with my children.
6. Never admitting I am wrong. Especially to my spouse and at work.

PROGRAM- Opposite virtue: **SUPERNATURAL SPIRIT- LIFE OF FAITH**

Means to form this virtue:

1. I will live my faith by meditating 15 min. every day, conscious of my dependency on God to be able to accomplish anything in my life. I will especially meditate on the Incarnation and our Blessed mother's vision of faith.
2. I will live my faith by attending Mass twice during the weekday and put an effort to live the supernatural aspects of the Mass offering it up for my family.
3. I will live my faith by seeing Jesus Christ in other people and accept them as they are and not as I would like them to be. I will work on seeing Christ working in these people, especially my spouse when...
4. I will live my faith by not taking myself so seriously. Put everything into the proper perspective (of Christ) and be able to see that being right or wrong is not the most important thing, it is showing the other person love and understanding. Go into conversations with that attitude and try to listen more. (esp. with Bob)
5. I will live my faith by making sure that all of my decisions are based on supernatural criterion and that I do not rationalize especially when I .....
6. I will live my faith by looking to please Christ and admitting when I am wrong and not cover up if I have failed. This is a gift I give Christ.



IDEAL- Christ Crucified for love of me

MOTTO- Who is in the center???

OBSTACLES- Root sin: **VANITY**

Manifestations of root sin:

1. I can be really hurt if people do not treat me with respect especially my mother.
2. I am always speaking about myself and all the things that I do esp. to the friends at the club.
3. I cannot say no to anyone. Always allow people to use me. Esp. with Bob and Sally.
4. I am afraid to stand up for what I believe. I do not want people to think I am a religious fanatic. Especially with...
5. I always worry that if I discipline my children that they might not love me.
6. I love and live for when people compliment me and appreciate my talents, especially my spouse and kids and Mary.

PROGRAM- Opposite virtue: **PASSIONATE AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST**

Means to form this virtue: I will form a passionate relationship with Christ by:

1. Meditating daily on the passion, looking for the fruit of being convinced of Christ's love for me and that I do not need to look for love in any other place.
2. Coming to grips with my feelings of rejection. Bring my most painful memories of being rejected (esp. as a child) to Christ in prayer and realize that HE was there all the time loving me.
3. Attending Mass twice during the Weekdays (Tues. & Thurs.) and focus on the personal sacrifice of love that I receive from a Christ who dies for me.
4. Before I accept any projects or get involved in anything I will first tell them I have to think about it and then see if it is for God's glory or my own. He owns my heart.
5. Seeing all that happens within my family as coming from the loving hands of God and whatever I do to them I do to Christ. I will discipline with love and firmness.
6. Not speaking about myself. Concentrate on speaking about others understanding that I must decrease and offer up all my own success to Christ in secret, my gift just to him.



IDEAL- Christ in Gethsemane

MOTTO- Your will be done! (not mine)

OBSTACLES- Root sin: **SENSUALITY**

**Manifestations of root sin:**

1. Laziness, always putting things off, especially exercise.
2. Disorganization and disorder. I do whatever is "immediate".
3. Only do things when I "feel like it". Moodiness controls me.
4. Anger and impatience if I do not feel good. I cannot handle pressure.
5. I live to shop or watch TV, the only thing that picks me up.
6. Always put my prayer life off. Inconsistency with God.

PROGRAM- Opposite virtue: SELF DISCIPLINE AND FOCUS FOR LOVE OF CHRIST

Means to form this virtue: I will practice self-discipline for love of Christ by:

1. Meditating 15 min. a day especially on Christ and his total self-giving to others.
2. Making a plan for my spiritual life (Rosary, exam, sp. reading...) and follow it very closely, putting it first not last. I will offer up all my prayers for each child every day.
3. Making up a schedule to live by and follow it. Do not do what is the immediate thing. Accomplish what is on the list. See it as God's will for me and my way of loving Christ.
4. By not watching TV until I have finished my prayers and have spent quality time with my spouse seeing the time after dinner as the most important moment in the day.
5. By being aware of my sentiments and moods and try to make sure that they do not get in the way of what I should do. I will try to put on Christ's sentiments and see all through a supernatural point of view, something I can offer up to him as an act of love.
6. When I do not want to do something offer it up for some specific intention, knowing that this is my most powerful weapon.