



What is Christian Coaching?

Christian coaching is an ongoing conversation that empowers a person or team to fully live out God's calling – in their life and profession. The goal of coaching is for you to listen to the Holy Spirit, discover new things about yourself, and take action to reshape your life around that learning.

The coaching relationship is expected to produce insights, greater personal awareness, changed behaviors, actions, and ultimately results that satisfy the client. Much is expected of you: to evaluate, reason, imagine, decide, and implement.

What Coaching Is

Coaching is about you – your goals, your learning, and your growth. Together you and your coach will listen to the Holy Spirit to hear His voice about you.

Coaching is about learning – rather than teaching. You are the expert on your life. Your coach uses coaching techniques such as active listening, open questions, encouragement, challenging a bit, and always remaining supportive. All to assist you in discovering insights and taking next steps.

Coaching is about action – your action. Each session you will determine 1-3 action steps you will take before the next session. You may be surprised how quickly you progress toward your goals.

"It is not difficult to know a thing;
what is difficult is to know how to
use what you know."
– Han Fei Tzu

Coaching is about all of you – not just your work or ministry. We all know that changing old habits and thought patterns are difficult. Your coach recognizes these patterns and will support you as you change and grow.

What Coaching Isn't

It's not therapy. Although many of the communication techniques are the same, like active listening, reflecting, use of questions, limited advice giving, etc., therapy focuses on the past to bring healing and unblock a person to move ahead. Coaching is future and action-oriented, for people who are basically clear of psychological and emotional issues.

It's not mentoring. Mentors are experts in a particular field who seek to pass on their expertise to a person. Mentors provide knowledge, advice, guidance, correction, and encouragement to people who are newer and junior—by experience if not by position or age. They may use some coaching techniques, but mentors usually play the roles of advisor and teacher to guide and impart knowledge and wisdom.

It's not training. In training, the trainer sets the agenda. Change comes from outside the participant, via the trainer. In coaching, you set the agenda. Coaches use adult learning principles of self-discovery to motivate change from within you.

It's not authoritarian. Did you have a tough sports coach who used to yell at you and make you do a million push-ups if you made a mistake? That's not coaching. Your coach will push you beyond what you might think you can do, but will always be supportive. You are in control. The responsibility to decide and act is yours.

Why Does Coaching Work?

Coaching works because it brings out your best – what God put in! Coaches believe you can create your own best answers and are trained to support you in that process.

Specifically, this is what your coach will do during coaching sessions:

- *Listen.* Your story is central. Coaches fully engage in what you are saying. They also listen to the Holy Spirit and encourage you to do the same.
- *Ask questions.* Coaches use questions to stimulate your thinking and creativity. Questions are about possibilities and the future.
- *Encourage.* Everyone needs encouragements, and usually we don't get enough. Your coach will hold up your vision, your progress, and your efforts.
- *Facilitate while letting you lead.* Coaches facilitate your learning and problem solving. Yet, they are never fully leading – you are, with your agenda and your approach.

Why Use a Coach?

The reasons people want coaching are endless, and as unique as the person. Here are a few examples that motivate people to use a coach.

- To make significant changes
- To better deal with uncertainty
- To make better decisions
- To set better goals
- To reach goals faster
- To grow spiritually
- To become financially more stable
- To get ahead personally
- To have a collaborative partner
- To improve their relationships
- To make a bigger impact on the world
- To be a better leader
- To simplify their lives
- To reduce stress
- To keep up with the speed of life
- To address transitions in location and employment

“You will never maximize your potential in any area without coaching. It is impossible. You may be good. You may even be better than everyone else. But without outside input you will never be as good as you could be.”
—Andy Stanley, *The Next Generation*

Exercise: Circle the things from the above list that you desire.

How is Christian coaching unique?

Coaches, Christian or not, will use many of the same communication tools. The big difference is that Christian coaches bring Christian beliefs and practices to the coaching relationship. If you are a Believer, you have the Holy Spirit. It's paramount that you listen to what He says regarding your goals, actions and next steps.

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened...”
Ephesians 1:18

Christian coaches will encourage you to listen more to the Holy Spirit and then act. Together you will look at how God has called and equipped you in life and achievement. You can feel comfortable sharing your spiritual needs, doubts, and desires. Christian coaches will support you where you are and encourage you in the direction you want to grow.