

WHYZMEN BEHAVIORAL CHECKLIST

Living Into Our Values Across All Domains of Life

Men Engaging Retirement · Session 8: The Ground Beneath Me

WHERE THIS FITS · SESSION 8: THE GROUND BENEATH ME

Values known. Strengths identified. Now: does how you live match what you know?

By Session 8 you have named your values, identified your strengths, and written your story. This checklist asks the next question: are the behaviors of your daily life consistent with what you now know about yourself? It is not a performance review. It is a mirror. A mirror's value depends entirely on your willingness to look honestly.

Do not try to work through all 15 categories at once.

In Session 8, you will choose **two categories** that feel most urgent in your current transition. Those two become your initial behavioral commitments in Charter Section 3.1. Over the following months, your triad works through **one category per meeting** — giving the 15 categories a natural rhythm across 15 months of triad life. The checklist outlasts the program. That is by design.

In **Session 13 (Legacy & Letters)**, the checklist reappears as a review tool — looking back across the categories you have worked through to ask: where have I grown? What does my triad say? This feeds the ethical will and the letters you write.

Session 8 — Your two starting categories:

Category 1 (most urgent): _____

Category 2 (second priority): _____

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

This checklist translates your core values into observable, specific behaviors across every domain of your second-half life. It is not a performance review. It is a mirror — and like any good mirror, its value depends entirely on your willingness to look honestly.

As Brené Brown writes: "Only about 10 percent of people actually operationalize their values into teachable, observable behaviors. If you're not going to do that work, it's better not to profess values at all. They become a cat poster."

- 1. Use it for self-assessment.** Work through each category honestly. Check the behaviors you are currently living. Circle the ones that represent your most significant growth edge.
- 2. Use it in your triad.** Share one category per month. Ask your triad: 'Where do you see me living this well? Where do you see the gap?'
- 3. Use it as a Charter living section.** The behaviors you commit to become the 'Living Into My Values' section of your Retirement Charter — the place where your values move from declaration to practice.
- 4. Use it annually.** Revisit this checklist each year as part of your Charter review. Growth you cannot see in a month may be visible across a year.

Showing Up With Intention Ephesians 5:15–16

- ☐ I am both thoughtful and deliberate about how I invest my time and energy.
- ☐ I approach each day with a sense of possibility rather than drift or routine.
- ☐ I am fully engaged in what I have committed to — you will not hear me saying 'I don't care' or see me acting as though I don't.
- ☐ I take initiative rather than waiting for someone else to give me direction.
- ☐ I bring meaningful ideas and perspective to the people around me — not just compliance.
- ☐ I am prepared to offer my honest point of view, even when it costs something.
- ☐ I practice integrity in all that I do — choosing what is right over what is fast, comfortable, or easy.
- ☐ I take ownership for creating structure in my own life rather than waiting for an institution to provide it.
- ☐ I take responsibility for infusing hope into the people around me: naming goals, finding pathways, and demonstrating that forward movement is possible.
- ☐ I take responsibility for representing my values when I communicate — in person, in writing, and online.
- ☐ I show up prepared for conversations and commitments that matter.
- ☐ I am honest about the difference between being busy and being purposeful.

REFLECTION: Where in my life am I showing up on autopilot rather than with intention? What would it look like to be fully present there?

Faith and Spiritual Practice Proverbs 4:23

- ☐ I maintain regular, unhurried engagement with Scripture — not as a duty but as a conversation.
- ☐ I am honest with God about my doubts, fears, disappointments, and confusion.
- ☐ I allow my faith to shape my behavior, not just my identity or social affiliation.
- ☐ I engage in regular prayer — including listening, not only asking.
- ☐ I am part of a community of faith where I am known, not just where I am present.
- ☐ I allow trusted brothers to speak into my spiritual life.
- ☐ I practice Sabbath — not as a productivity hack but as an act of trust.
- ☐ I am honest when my faith is struggling rather than performing spiritual confidence I don't have.
- ☐ I hold my theological convictions with both conviction and humility.
- ☐ I invite God into my decisions rather than asking him to bless choices already made.
- ☐ I practice gratitude as a spiritual discipline, not merely an emotional posture.
- ☐ I am growing in my understanding of Scripture rather than coasting on what I already know.

REFLECTION: Is my daily life consistent with what I say I believe? Where is the gap between my professed faith and my lived faith?

Marriage and Primary Relationships Ephesians 5:25

- ☐ I am attentive to my wife's experience of the retirement transition, not only my own.
- ☐ I take initiative in our marriage rather than waiting to be pursued.
- ☐ I am honest with my wife about what I am struggling with rather than masking it.
- ☐ I am present with my wife — not physically nearby but mentally elsewhere.
- ☐ I listen to my wife with the same attention I once gave to important professional conversations.
- ☐ I make time for our marriage to be a priority, not an afterthought.
- ☐ I am willing to seek help for our marriage — counseling, mentorship, or honest conversation — rather than waiting until there is a crisis.
- ☐ I take responsibility for my own emotional health rather than allowing my unprocessed feelings to become her burden.
- ☐ I honor my wife's need for her own identity, purpose, and pace in this season.
- ☐ I communicate my needs and desires directly rather than hoping she will figure them out.
- ☐ I practice forgiveness — both seeking it and extending it — as a regular discipline, not only after major offenses.
- ☐ I celebrate and express gratitude for who my wife is and what she contributes.

REFLECTION: Am I as intentional about my marriage as I was about my career? What does my wife most need from me in this season?

Asking for Help Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

- ☐ I ask for help — including from men who are younger, less experienced, or differently positioned than I am.
- ☐ I reach out for support when I am overwhelmed rather than white-knuckling through alone.
- ☐ I ask for what I need rather than blaming others or feeling quietly resentful when needs go unmet.
- ☐ I am willing to ask for what I need even if it means being seen as vulnerable or uncertain.
- ☐ When I am not clear on what is expected or needed of me, I ask rather than guessing or withdrawing.
- ☐ I do not judge others when they ask for help — I honor it as wisdom.
- ☐ I allow my triad to actually know what is going on in my life.
- ☐ I distinguish between asking for help and relinquishing responsibility — I can do both.
- ☐ I am building a network of trusted people I can call on — not just people I can help.

REFLECTION: Where am I currently struggling but have not asked for help? What is the cost of continuing alone?

Stewardship of Time and Energy Psalm 90:12

- ☐ I do not over-commit — I say yes only to what I intend to follow through on.
- ☐ I acknowledge when I cannot follow through on a commitment and communicate that clearly.
- ☐ I take care of my physical, emotional, and spiritual health rather than running on depletion.
- ☐ I value rest, play, and leisure as legitimate and important — not as indulgences to be earned.
- ☐ I acknowledge that exhaustion and burnout diminish my capacity for relationships, creativity, and purpose.
- ☐ I hold myself accountable for my own wellbeing rather than blaming circumstances or other people.
- ☐ I am honest about how I am actually spending my time versus how I intend to spend it.
- ☐ I protect time for what matters most rather than allowing the urgent to crowd out the important.
- ☐ I review and revise my commitments regularly in light of my values and calling.
- ☐ I am flexible — I hold my plans with open hands when circumstances require it.

REFLECTION: Am I investing my time and energy in alignment with my values, or am I busy in ways that don't reflect what I say matters most?

Stewardship of the Body 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

- ☐ I treat my body as something entrusted to me, not merely as a vehicle for productivity.
- ☐ I make consistent investments in sleep, movement, and nutrition — not as vanity but as stewardship.
- ☐ I am honest with my physician and with myself about my physical health.
- ☐ I take responsibility for understanding and managing the health risks most relevant to men in my age and stage.
- ☐ I do not use food, alcohol, screens, or other substances to manage emotions I am not willing to name.
- ☐ I acknowledge the connection between my physical health and my emotional, relational, and spiritual health.
- ☐ I build movement and physical activity into my life as a regular practice, not just an occasional effort.
- ☐ I make and keep preventive health appointments rather than avoiding them.
- ☐ I am honest with my wife and my triad about my physical health rather than minimizing or concealing concerns.

REFLECTION: Am I treating my body as something entrusted to me? Where is the gap between my stated values and my physical habits?

Emotional Literacy Proverbs 14:30

- ☐ I am aware of my emotions and how they affect my behavior, my relationships, and my decisions.
- ☐ I am willing to name what I am feeling — even when that feels awkward or unfamiliar.
- ☐ I manage my emotional reactivity rather than acting out of it.
- ☐ I recognize the emotions most likely to arise for me in times of stress, loss, or transition.
- ☐ I am able to reset after setbacks rather than staying stuck in shame, resentment, or self-pity.
- ☐ I am responsible for the emotional energy I bring into relationships, rooms, and conversations.
- ☐ I distinguish between feeling an emotion and being controlled by it.
- ☐ I do not use anger, silence, or sarcasm as substitutes for honest conversation.
- ☐ I am growing in my capacity to sit with difficult emotions — my own and others' — without rushing to fix or dismiss them.
- ☐ I understand that emotional avoidance often costs more than emotional honesty.
- ☐ I can talk about how I feel without requiring others to manage those feelings for me.

REFLECTION: What emotions am I most prone to suppressing or disguising? What would it cost me to name them?

Investing in Community Hebrews 10:24–25

- ☐ I recognize and affirm the good in others — not only when they exceed expectations but as a regular practice.
- ☐ I practice gratitude with the people around me, not only in my private thoughts.
- ☐ I stay out of comparison and competition with other men.
- ☐ I take responsibility for developing and maintaining meaningful relationships rather than waiting for relationships to come to me.
- ☐ I set appropriate boundaries with others and honor the boundaries they set with me.
- ☐ I extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words, and actions of others before assuming the worst.
- ☐ I am mindful of other people's time and do not waste it.
- ☐ I pursue new relationships rather than only maintaining existing ones.
- ☐ I am willing to be known — not only to be helpful or impressive.
- ☐ I invest in the men around me, including men younger than I am.
- ☐ I take responsibility for hospitality — creating space where others feel welcomed and known.
- ☐ I only share information that is mine to share.
- ☐ I honor the personal lives of the people around me as important — not just their roles or functions.

REFLECTION: Am I building community with intention, or only maintaining the relationships that are convenient and already established?

Choosing Courage Over Comfort Joshua 1:9

- ☐ I stay aligned with my values when facing difficult decisions — especially when it costs something.
- ☐ I lean into difficult conversations rather than avoiding or delaying them.
- ☐ I take meaningful risks even when the outcome is uncertain.
- ☐ I am willing to put myself out there even when it means the possibility of criticism, failure, or rejection.
- ☐ I choose courage over comfort — facing difficult tasks and conversations rather than finding sophisticated reasons to avoid them.
- ☐ I am honest about fear rather than disguising it as wisdom, caution, or strategy.
- ☐ I take initiative on things that matter to me rather than waiting for permission or certainty.
- ☐ I am willing to change my mind when the evidence warrants it.
- ☐ I am honest when I have been wrong rather than doubling down to protect my ego.
- ☐ I challenge the status quo — in my own life and in the communities I am part of — when it needs to change.

REFLECTION: Where am I currently choosing comfort over courage? What difficult conversation or decision am I avoiding?

Giving and Receiving Feedback Proverbs 27:17

- ☐ I give feedback in a way that is honest, respectful, and genuinely aimed at the other person's growth.
- ☐ I receive feedback without becoming defensive, dismissive, or retaliatory.
- ☐ I receive feedback in a way that is consistent with my stated values — I do not profess openness and then punish honesty.
- ☐ I distinguish between feedback that requires a response and feedback that requires reflection.
- ☐ I create conditions where the people closest to me feel safe to tell me the truth.
- ☐ I seek feedback rather than waiting for it — especially from people who know me well.
- ☐ I thank people for honest feedback even when it is uncomfortable.
- ☐ I circle back when there is something that needs to be addressed, clarified, or repaired.

REFLECTION: Am I someone others can be honest with? Am I honest with others in a way that serves their growth rather than my comfort?

Resetting After Setbacks Romans 5:3–4

- ☐ I am able to reality-check the stories I tell myself during conflict, disappointment, and setback.
- ☐ I own my mistakes clearly and without excessive self-flagellation.
- ☐ I discuss my mistakes honestly rather than concealing, minimizing, or deflecting them.
- ☐ I take responsibility for my own recovery after a failure or disappointment rather than waiting for others to rescue or validate me.
- ☐ I circle back when something needs to be clarified, repaired, or reconciled.
- ☐ I identify what I am learning from difficulty rather than only enduring it.
- ☐ I share what I have learned from failure with the people around me when it would be useful to them.
- ☐ I do not let pride prevent me from apologizing and making amends when I have caused harm.
- ☐ I am growing in my resilience — not by becoming numb to loss but by recovering with more grace.

REFLECTION: What is the setback, loss, or failure I am still carrying? What would it look like to own it, learn from it, and move forward?

Building Trust Luke 16:10

- ☐ I choose to practice my values rather than simply professing them.
- ☐ I do what I say I am going to do.
- ☐ I do not over-promise — I take on only what I intend to deliver.
- ☐ I own my mistakes, apologize genuinely, and make amends.
- ☐ I respect the appropriate boundaries of every relationship and ask when I am not sure what is appropriate.
- ☐ I am aware of both my competencies and my limitations — and honest about both.
- ☐ I am willing to ask for help rather than performing competence I do not have.
- ☐ I am willing to say no and ask for what I need.
- ☐ I do not tell other people's stories without their permission.
- ☐ I talk to people, not about them.
- ☐ I have direct, honest conversations rather than relying on back-channel communication or passive agreement.
- ☐ I hold others accountable with care — in a way that honors the relationship rather than weaponizing it.

REFLECTION: Where has trust been broken in one of my key relationships? What is mine to own in that?

Generativity and Mentorship 2 Timothy 2:2

- ☐ I actively invest in the growth of someone younger than I am — not waiting to be asked.
- ☐ I make my hard-won wisdom, mistakes, and lessons available rather than keeping them to myself.
- ☐ I create opportunities to pass on what I have learned — formally and informally.
- ☐ I am more interested in the growth of those I mentor than in being admired by them.
- ☐ I am patient with the learning curves of people who are earlier in life than I am.
- ☐ I distinguish between advising and accompanying — I know when to give direction and when to simply walk alongside.
- ☐ I take the emerging generation seriously rather than dismissing their questions or challenges.
- ☐ I am investing in the next generation not only with wisdom but with time and presence.
- ☐ I am building relationships that will outlast me.

REFLECTION: Who is one person I am actively investing in? What would intentional mentorship look like in this season of my life?

Legacy and Memory-Making Psalm 78:4

- ☐ I am intentional about what I am building and what I am leaving behind.
- ☐ I am capturing stories, values, and memories that the people I love will want someday.
- ☐ I am honest about the legacy I am actually building versus the one I intend to build.
- ☐ I take responsibility for telling my own story rather than leaving it to others to reconstruct.
- ☐ I am present in the lives of children and grandchildren in ways that create lasting memory.
- ☐ I invest in concentrated, purposeful experiences with the people I love — not just proximity.
- ☐ I am writing, recording, or otherwise preserving what matters most about my life and faith.
- ☐ I am passing on values explicitly — not assuming they will be absorbed by osmosis.
- ☐ I am living in a way that I would be comfortable with my grandchildren seeing.

REFLECTION: What am I building that will outlast me? What stories am I capturing that my grandchildren will want someday?

Living With Purpose and Direction Colossians 3:23

- ☐ I have clarity about what I am called to do in this season of life — and I am doing it.
- ☐ I represent information about myself and my life accurately — to others and to myself.
- ☐ I regularly engage in activities that grow me as a person.
- ☐ I lead by example rather than only by instruction.
- ☐ I am honest about the difference between motion and progress.
- ☐ I take responsibility for closing the gaps in my own growth rather than blaming circumstances.
- ☐ I set near-term goals that serve my longer-term calling.
- ☐ I regularly review my life against my Charter rather than treating it as a document I completed.
- ☐ I manage complexity, contradiction, and paradox rather than demanding simple answers.
- ☐ I maintain composure in crisis — and help others do the same.
- ☐ I challenge my own assumptions and habits rather than defaulting to what has always worked.
- ☐ I am honest about where I have been drifting — in my faith, my relationships, my health, or my purpose.
- ☐ I am moving from 'What should I do?' to 'Who am I called to be?' — and my daily life reflects that shift.

REFLECTION: Am I living from a clear sense of calling, or am I drifting? What does my Charter say I should be doing — and am I doing it?

The Transition Itself Isaiah 43:18–19

- ☐ I am honest about where I actually am in the retirement transition rather than performing an adjustment I have not yet made.
- ☐ I resist the temptation to define my worth by my former title, income, position, or productivity.
- ☐ I am curious about who I am becoming rather than only protective of who I have been.
- ☐ I allow the men in my triad to see me in struggle — not just in strength.
- ☐ I am pursuing new relationships, habits, and rhythms rather than only maintaining what was established in the first half.
- ☐ I have moved from asking 'What should I do?' to 'Who am I called to be?'
- ☐ I am grieving what has been lost in this transition rather than bypassing the grief.
- ☐ I am not waiting for the 'right moment' to begin living with purpose — I am beginning now.
- ☐ I am living from my values rather than from habit, obligation, or inertia.
- ☐ I am honest about the fears beneath my resistance to change.
- ☐ I hold my identity loosely enough to allow God to reshape it.
- ☐ I am not comparing my transition to anyone else's — I am attending to my own.

REFLECTION: Where am I still clinging to the first half? What does faithfulness to the second half actually require of me?

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” — Proverbs 4:23