

PARTICIPANT GUIDE • SESSION 11 • MISSION & TRUE NORTH

WHYZMEN • PARTICIPANT GUIDE • SESSION 11

Mission & True North

Whose you are. What you do. What fits on the shirt.

Bring this morning: your Harvest Charter Part One (§1.0–§1.4), §2.0 My Next Chapter, the Seven Ways to Coast card from your Session 10 envelope, what your test action found out, and your Ten Domain Why's if you wrote them (optional). If you drafted three verbs in the fall, bring them. The writing happens on these pages and on the two cards you will be handed.

Monday, February 15, 2027 (Presidents' Day) • 9:00–10:30 AM • New Community Church

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” — Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking*

This Morning

	Movement	Minutes	What you leave with
1	Re-entry — what did you find out?	18	Your test action said aloud, and what it made you want to do next
2	Construction — three rungs, three or four verbs	27	A draft of all three rungs, in pencil
3	The Clearness Room — demonstrated, then the rule	34	The discipline your triad will run on Clearness Monday
4	Send-off — the T-shirt test	11	Your first T-shirt reaction, already gathered; your triad’s order for Clearness Monday

You are not starting a mission statement this morning. You are finishing one. Between October and now you have produced eight independent readings of yourself, and they point the same way. The job today is to pull one sentence out of them — and then to let your two brothers hear it before you decide it is true.

Three Weeks, One Sentence

When	What	What comes out
Today • Feb 15	Session 11. Draft all three rungs. Watch the Clearness Room demonstrated. Take the Field Tests card; the T-shirt test starts now.	Draft r1 • first T-shirt reaction
Feb 22 • no class	Clearness Monday. No class: your triad meets here, 9:00–10:30, in its own room, facilitators floating, and runs the Clearness Room — 25–30 minutes a man. Bring draft r1, your T-shirt card with five reactions, and the Clearness Room Guide. Prep Sheet to your two brothers by Thursday, February 18.	Draft r2, marked Clear or Cloudy — honestly
Mar 1 • Session 12	Ten minutes at the tables: your r2 at the Five Gates. Then Building the Vision.	r2 confirmed; A Tuesday in 2031 begins; one conversation or one door assigned
Mar 8 • Session 13	Your conversation or door reported on the Bridge. The Essential Few: the three things this mission tells you to decline.	\$2.1 final

1

Re-entry — What Did You Find Out?

18 minutes • tables • your test action, then the inventory

The harvest is in — eight readings of you

Most men arrive at this session believing the page is blank. It is not. Here is what you already have, what each one is called, and where it goes in your mission. Keep this page; the names come up for the rest of the program.

What you have	Where it came from	What it means	What it feeds
Your Story	S5–6	The through-line of your life — not the résumé. The redemption and continuity themes; the people your story keeps returning to.	The for whom
Values Compass	S7	Your two core values. The orphan value is the one with no road to it yet.	The value in the middle blank
The Signature	S8 • §1.3	“At my best, I am the man who...” Your Top 5 strengths and three kept skills, in two or three sentences. The capstone of Part One.	The verbs
Contribution Hypothesis	S8	A testable guess at how your wiring serves someone. Not your mission — the thing you ran a test action on.	Evidence from outside the room
Caring Shift	S8 • §1.3	What you cared about at forty, and what you care about now, and what caused the shift.	The direction the mission leans
Meaning Audit	S8 appendix	A hundred points across Agency • Belonging • Cause, once at your career peak and once today. Your largest gap is where the mission should stretch you.	The bridge sentence
Named by the Body	S9	What your wife and this room see in you that you could not see alone. Row six of your Board. 1 Cor 12:7.	The Signature gate — it is yours, not borrowed
The Threshold	S9 • §1.0	Leaving behind • carrying forward • true in five years • what you asked Christ to carry.	The No — what the mission declines
My Next Chapter • §2.0	The Wilderness	Your Wilderness page of direction — and the Ten Why’s, if you wrote them.	The raw sentence

“If we were to ask somebody, ‘What is your purpose?’ — the you in that sentence requires that they know who they are.” — Anthony Burrow, Cornell

Your test action — three questions at your table

One sentence each. If you did nothing, say so and say why — “I didn’t get to it” is data about your calendar; “I didn’t want to” is data about the hypothesis. Both are useful this morning.

First, hands — the break, checked off: triad met (one sentence) • open to §2.0 My Next Chapter • open to §1.4 My Faith Foundation • the test action, done / not yet. **Practice of the Week:** one moment from the break with “One call a week.” One moment each, no commentary.

What did you try?

What surprised you?

What did it make you want to do next?

A goal can be finished. A purpose cannot. Andre Agassi reached No. 1 in the world and found “every day is Groundhog Day.” If a goal can be accomplished, it raises the question of what becomes of you once you have. Retirement is the forty-year goal, accomplished — and the finish line was never a direction. A purpose is the organizer of your goals: it tells you which one to pick up next. That is why the Charter writes §2.1 before §3.1, and why you cannot skip to the goals.

2

Construction — Three Rungs, Three or Four Verbs

27 minutes • solo and pairs • a draft, not a deliverable

The drive has a name. Erik Erikson, 1950: the task of the second half is generativity — “the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation,” the urge to make, mentor, and hand on — or stagnation, where the man who stops giving begins “to indulge himself as if he were his own one and only child.” Seventy years on, the Harvard Study found generativity in midlife among the strongest predictors of flourishing in the seventies. “Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation” (Psalm 71:18). Erikson describes the drive. Scripture supplies the object. Your sentence names the person.

Where a mission comes from

Two pictures, one claim. Buechner drew two circles — your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger — and called the overlap your calling. Richard Leider wrote it as arithmetic: gifts + passions + values = calling. You took every one of those inventories in Sessions 6 through 8. A mission is excavated, not invented. Simon Sinek’s Golden Circle says it a third way: your What flows from your Why. The Ten Domain Why’s, if you wrote them in the break, are the Why; the mission is the Why put to work.

The three rungs

Mission comes from the Latin *mittere*, to send. Nobody sends himself. A mission has three rungs, and the order matters, because each one answers a question the one below it cannot.

Rung	The sentence	What it settles
1 Commission — whose you are	“I have been sent to _____.”	Passive on purpose. The only rung that names the Sender — and the only one that can answer the Galatians Test.
2 Contribution — what your triad holds you to	“I do _____ for _____ so that _____.”	The working sentence. Specific enough to be asked about next Tuesday. Test it with the So-That Ladder: ask “so that what?” until it stops at a floor — or a Person.
3 The T-shirt — what fits on the shirt	Three or four verbs.	Compression. You can say it from memory, under pressure, and a twelve-year-old understands it. It comes last.

Most men start on rung 3 because it is the fun one. That is why so many mission statements are slogans.

An outside witness. Richard Bolles wrote *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, the best-selling career book in history. He was also an Episcopal priest, and in *How to Find Your Mission in Life* (1991) he argued that every person's mission has three parts in a fixed order: to stand hour by hour in the conscious presence of God; to make the world a better place by following the Spirit's leading; and only then to exercise the talent you most delight in using, in the settings that most appeal to you, for the purposes God most needs done. Commission, Contribution, T-shirt. The ladder is not a WhyzMen invention.

The Galatians Test — the only test you pass by failing

Read your T-shirt out loud. Then ask: would this sentence still be true, and still be worth ten years of my life, if Christ were not in me?

If the answer is yes, you have written an excellent purpose statement. Rewrite it until the answer is no.

Every other exercise in the Charter rewards a yes. This one does not. A man who answers “yes” has not written a bad sentence; he has written a good one that anybody could have written — and a noble purpose fails this test just as cleanly as a selfish one. The test is read at rung 3 and applied at rung 2, but it is *answered* at rung 1. When a man fails, he reaches for his verbs and swaps them, and fails again, because no rearrangement of the shirt reaches the question of who sent him. Five statements were run through it, including the program lead's. All five failed. Every one was fixed by the same move: writing rung 1.

Four ways a good sentence fails	What it sounds like
Spiritual veneer	The same ambition in new vocabulary. Caught only by the open-hand question: what happens to this mission if God closes the door on it?
The unnamed agent	“What I was given... where I am sent... what was lent to me...” — the sentence concedes a giver and declines to say who. The hardest one to catch.
Pious abstraction	“Glorify God in all things.” Passes flawlessly and is useless on a Tuesday morning.
The noble self-sourced purpose	Entirely other-directed, entirely self-sourced. Nothing selfish in it — and it never says where the showing-up comes from.

What the test is not. Not self-erasure — “crucified with Christ” re-sources the self; it does not delete it. Not a scrupulosity exam — Romans 8:1. Not a verdict on the work — most failing statements describe genuinely good lives. **Cloudy is a permitted answer.** A man who cannot reach “no” after three honest tries writes his best draft, marks it Cloudy, and brings it to his triad.

Activity — your three or four verbs

Ninety seconds circling, on instinct. Narrow to three or four. Three minutes drafting. Two minutes reading it to the man beside you. **This is a draft, not a deliverable.** Three more weeks before §2.1 is due.

MAKE	GATHER	TEND	CARRY
Build	Connect	Teach	Steward
Create	Convene	Mentor	Preserve
Design	Host	Guide	Record
Launch	Bridge	Encourage	Bless
Plant	Invite	Comfort	Serve
Restore	Translate	Listen	Accompany
Repair	Organize	Defend	Release
Simplify	Welcome	Advocate	Hand on
Write	Include	Forgive	Deliver

None of these? Write your own in the margin. The bank is a prompt, not a menu.

MY MISSION IS TO

_____, _____, and _____

three or four action verbs

the value or principle I stand for — wholeness, dignity, courage. Never a deliverable.

for / among _____

the people I serve

Two things to watch in your own draft. Verbs that describe your old job — that is not wrong, it is data about what has not yet been released (§3.1, at Session 13). And a deliverable in the middle blank (“a plan,” “a smooth transition”) — push once: what is the principle underneath that outcome?

Rung 1, in pencil — two minutes, solo

“I have been sent to

_____.”

Now ask the Galatians question of your shirt, once, silently. Most of you will answer yes this morning. Good — that is the honest starting point. The Clearness Room is where rung 1 gets found, and it cannot be found alone.

The second screen. Because pious abstraction passes the Galatians Test, it is never run alone. Immediately after it: *Would my triad know, from this sentence alone, what to ask me about next Tuesday?* A finished mission fails the first screen and passes the second. A slogan does neither. A devotional does only the first.

Rung 2, in pencil

I do _____ for _____ so that
_____.

Nobody rewrites in the room. Pencil stays pencil until Clearness Monday.

The top pocket. At Basecamp you put your values in the top pocket of the Knapsack (the pack) — where you reach without taking the pack off. This morning your True North goes in beside them. Session 13 weighs the rest of the pack; this morning only the top pocket is open. *“Eventually you must choose one, or else your second half will be pretty much a repeat of the first.”* — Bob Buford, Halftime. We say it a little differently: set one bearing, not one thing.

My True North, in pencil

True North is one short line: the direction you want everything else to bend toward. **It is not the only thing in your life. It is the bearing you check the others against.**

Your mission is what you *do* — three or four verbs on a T-shirt. True North is what you are *oriented toward* — a word or a phrase. The verbs are how you travel; True North is which way you face.

Buford said choose one thing, or your second half will repeat the first. Choosing one thing to the exclusion of all else is not the point. A compass does not forbid the path that wanders down to the river; it tells you which way is home.

Some True Norths other men have written

- “Following Jesus, wherever that leads this season.”
- “Fully present to the people God puts in front of me.”
- “Joy, received and shared.”
- “Paying attention to the world God made, and helping others see it.”
- “Handing on what I have been given.”
- “Being faithful in small things.”

Joy and delight can point north. “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever” (Westminster Shorter Catechism). Eric Liddell said, “When I run, I feel His pleasure.” A pastime can be part of your bearing; the question is whether it orders the rest of your week and sends you toward others.

A worked example • Walt, 71

Walt listed what pulls at him: his faith, fishing, his four grandsons, the church finance committee, and the Alaska trip with his wife. He asked of each one: does it order the rest of my week? Does it send me toward others? If a Tuesday drifted from it, would I notice?

Fishing is his delight, but on its own it doesn’t order anything. The finance committee is mostly his old CFO self. Alaska is a joy for him and his wife. What kept surfacing was the boys, and the faith his grandfather handed him in a boat.

Walt’s True North: *“Handing on what I have been given — to my grandsons first.”*

His mission (the T-shirt): Teach. Fish. Pray. What it bends: fishing becomes where he is with the boys, one grandson a month on the river. Alaska stays with his wife. The finance committee goes on his set-down list at Session 13. Source mark: F and C — his grandfather, and 2 Timothy 2:2.

Your turn — one minute, in pencil. Then two checks: if a Tuesday drifted from this, would I notice? And where did it come from — Christ (C), family (F) or industry (I)?

My True North:

It goes in the top pocket of §2.1, beside the mission. Nobody reads it aloud this morning. Bring it to the chair on Clearness Monday with your draft.

3

The Clearness Room

34 minutes • demonstrated live, then the rule • used by your triad on Clearness Monday

Why the room forbids advice

The Bible knew this before the psychologists did. Job’s friends sat with him seven days and nights and said nothing, “because they saw how great his suffering was” — and when they finally started advising, God rebuked them for it (Job 2:13; 42:7). By one count Jesus asks 307 questions in the Gospels, is asked 183, and directly answers three; on the Emmaus road he opens with “What are you discussing?” and lets them talk. *“The purposes of a person’s heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out”* (Prov 20:5) — the man cannot reach his own depths; someone else draws them out. And Anthony Burrow’s research says purpose cannot be crowdsourced: “tell me from your profile view which direction I’m heading” does not work, because purpose is an internal quest. Advice from outside cannot reach it. Honest questions can.

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak.” — James 1:19

The room’s covenant — read aloud, every time

We are here to listen, not to fix.

What is said in this room stays in this room.

We offer no advice unless the man in the chair asks for it.

We mirror and affirm what we hear — we do not judge, correct, or improve it.

We trust that a man, truly heard, will find his own clearing.

“You knit me together in my mother’s womb.” — Psalm 139:13. The One who made you is the one drawing you out.

The focus-man protocol — one round, 25–30 minutes, then rotate

Step	Time	What happens
1 Frame	1 min	He names what he brings — the draft, or the live question underneath it.
2 He speaks	5–8 min	Reads the three rungs aloud and two or three T-shirt reactions. Says where it feels solid and where it wobbles. No one breaks in.
3 Silence	30 sec	Let it land. Nobody fills it.
4 Open questions	10–15 min	Honest, open questions only. One follow-up, then yield. He is always free not to answer.

Step	Time	What happens
5	Mirror & affirm	5 min
6	He responds	2 min
7	Close & seal	1 min

The one rule. An honest question is one you do not already know the answer to. “Have you considered talking to a financial planner?” is advice wearing a question mark. Don’t. **Two traps** — the Fixing Reflex (you were paid for decades to solve things; the instinct will fire; name it, set it down, reach for a question) and Borrowed Clarity (a man without his own mission reaches for a louder man’s; no pairing on projects until each man can recite his own heading).

During the demonstration — what did you catch?

Four men sit on the committee. The rest of you hold the checklist from your Clearness Room Guide and watch for the rule: advice wearing a question mark • a third follow-up • the pace quickening • a nod or an “mm-hmm” that telegraphs a verdict • anyone filling the silence. Note it here; you will be asked.

Any man may call the rule. On Clearness Monday no facilitator sits in your room. Whoever notices, says the short line, kindly, and the round keeps going: “*Can we turn that into an open question?*” • “*Let’s open it to others.*” • “*Let’s leave a little silence.*” • “*Back to the chair.*” Nobody is in trouble. The lines are on page 1 of your Clearness Room Guide.

Is it a mission yet? — a self-check for Session 12, never a jury

The Five Gates — built right	The Felt Sense — rings true
Recital — you can say it from memory, no card.	Makes sense — it coheres with who you actually are. (Head)
Why — it names a reason, not a role; survives “but why?” three times.	Energizes — it gives life rather than drains it. (Heart)

The Five Gates — built right	The Felt Sense — rings true
Charge — saying it does something in the chest.	God's leading — consolation: peace, rightness, a settled yes. (Spirit)
No — you can name three things it tells you to decline.	Eases the calendar — you suddenly know where your time goes. (Will)
Signature — it traces to your real strengths and values, not a borrowed ideal.	

Both halves nod, or it isn't finished — and unfinished is allowed until Session 13. Accurate but dead fails. Alive but self-deceived fails.

4

Send-off — The T-shirt Test

11 minutes • Field Test 1 before Clearness Monday • the first reaction gathered now

A sentence nobody has heard is a private opinion about yourself. The Three Field Tests card is in your hand; here is why we are asking, and what you do first.

Test	When	What
1 • The T-shirt	By Feb 22 — everyone	Say your three or four verbs — nothing else — to five people: your wife, a child or grandchild, a friend outside this room, a younger man, someone who barely knows you. Write down word for word what they say back. Then: “What do you think that means I would do?”
2 • A Door	Session 12 assigns	Not homework yet. Session 12 asks for one conversation or one door: an organization where your “for whom” might live. A conversation, never a sign-up: “What could a man with my background actually be useful for here?”
3 • A Conversation	Session 12 assigns	Or the conversation: a man five years ahead of you. A younger man — a coffee, not a mentorship; afterward, who learned more? And one person on the receiving end of what your mission promises.

Where to knock, later: the Opportunity Map. When Session 12 asks for one door, the Map in your hand sorts the places men like you can serve by who they serve. Find the row that matches your “for whom.” If none fits, knock on a door of your own.

Keep the Map. What you learn at a door becomes a plank of the bridge at Session 13.

The first reaction happens now. Walk to another table and say your verbs to a man who is not in your triad. Write what came back:

Where confidence comes from

Albert Bandura at Stanford spent forty years on one question: what makes a man believe he can do a *specific* thing? Not self-esteem, not optimism. His answer is four sources of evidence, in this order of strength — and every one of them is built into the next two weeks.

Source	What it means	Where WhyzMen built it in
1 Do it small	You did a small version and it worked. The strongest source by far.	The T-shirt test. Your test action. Five reactions on a card.
2 Watch a man do it	You saw someone like you do it.	The demonstration this morning. The facilitators who crossed this country first.
3 Be told what they see	Credible people named it in you, specifically.	Named by the Body. Your wife's reading. The affirmations that close every Clearness round.
4 Keep the body calm	You tried it without alarm.	The silence. The no-fixing rule. "Cloudy" is allowed. A room that has been safe for ten sessions.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” — James 1:22

Clearness Monday — February 22

No class. Every triad has its own room at church, 9:00–10:30; the facilitators float between rooms. Put your §2.1 draft r1 on the Mission Prep Sheet (its own sheet, handed out with this guide; it has a box for your five T-shirt reactions) and send it to your two brothers by **Thursday, February 18**. Bring draft r1, your T-shirt card with five reactions, and the Clearness Room Guide. Decide the order; the timekeeper reads the covenant; three rounds of 25–30 minutes; the seal after each. Optional at 10:30: coffee in the big room with one question only — what did you hear yourself say? If your question is bigger than a sentence and you want a longer hour, ask; a full committee evening can be arranged.

Clearness Monday, Feb 22, 9:00 • our room _____ • order: _____ , _____ , _____

Two questions, on the way out

Anthony Burrow measures purpose with two questions. Answer them honestly now; you will answer them again at Session 15.

Does my life have a clear direction? 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5

Are my daily activities engaging and important? 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5

What Goes in Your Charter

What you wrote	Where it goes	When
Rungs 1, 2 and 3, in pencil	§2.1 My Mission and My True North — draft r1	Today
Draft r2, marked Clear or Cloudy	§2.1 — after the Clearness Room	Feb 22
Your five T-shirt reactions	Back of the Field Tests card; read two in the chair	By Feb 22
§2.0 My Next Chapter — it feeds §2.2, A Tuesday in 2031	§2.0	Written in the break; checked at Session 12
The three things this mission tells you to decline	First Steps Card → §3.1	Session 13

This Week and Next — every item, with honest minutes

Before Clearness Monday — about 75 minutes. The Clearness Room Guide, recommended reading (10) • your §2.1 Mission draft r1 on the Mission Prep Sheet, sent to both brothers by Thursday, February 18 (30) • read both brothers' sheets (10) • the T-shirt test: your three or four verbs to five people, their reactions on the card — one done in the room today (20) • your True North, one line in pencil in §2.1, if it did not come this morning (5).

Clearness Monday, and after — about 110 minutes. Monday, February 22, 9:00–10:30: Clearness Monday — no class; your triad's own room at church, facilitators floating (90) • afterwards, §2.1 draft r2 marked Clear or Cloudy, honestly (20) • Practice of the Week until Session 12 (March 1): Honest, open questions — 2 • Ask, card T3; try it, bring one moment.

Bring: February 22 — draft r1, your T-shirt card with the reactions, the Clearness Room Guide • March 1 — draft r2 and the card.

Optional — only if it calls to you, and not counted: rung 2 in pencil, if it did not come this morning • a book or one of the shorter readings (below) • a longer hour, if your question is bigger than a sentence.

About 3 hours over the two weeks, February 15 – March 1 — a milestone. Field Tests 2 and 3 are not homework now: Session 12 asks for one conversation or one door.

This Week's Reading — before Session 12

Recommended first

- *Clearness Room Guide* — covenant and checklist, adapted from Parker Palmer.

Books • any time, only if one calls to you

- Laurie Beth Jones, *The Path* — the three-verb method, the Gunpoint Test and the twelve-year-old test. The book this morning ran on.

- Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking* — two pages under “Vocation.” The two circles.

Shorter readings • WhyzMen, in your Session 11 folder

- *Where a Mission Comes From* — the five authors behind this morning’s three rungs. About 12 minutes.
- *Big P, Little p* — whose you are, and what you are for this season. Read it before rung 2 settles. About 10 minutes.
- *The Meaning Audit* — the reference behind the audit you did at Session 8: where your meaning has actually been coming from. About 10 minutes.
- *Cultivating Purpose* — Anthony Burrow on why purpose is built, not found. About 10 minutes.

Practice of the Week • Honest, open questions. Ask what you do not know the answer to. No advice with a question mark.

From the Toolkit: 2 • Ask • card T3

Rooted in: Parker Palmer — the Clearness Room rule, taken home.

Tried it this week ☐ • Bring one moment to the room.

“Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called ‘Today.’” — Hebrews 3:13

Scripture From This Morning

Reference	Why it was there
Psalm 71:18	“Till I declare your power to the next generation.” The drive has a name; Scripture tells you who it is for.
Galatians 2:20	The test. “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” The mission is examined for its source, not its quality.
Job 2:13 • 42:7	Seven silent days — and the rebuke when the advising began.
Luke 24:17	“What are you discussing?” — the Emmaus road opens with a question.
Proverbs 20:5	Deep waters; one who has insight draws them out. Why the room exists.
James 1:19 • 1:22	Quick to listen, slow to speak. Do what it says.
Psalm 139:13	The One who knit you is the one drawing you out.
Isaiah 6:8	“Here am I. Send me!” The sending.
Hebrews 3:13	“Encourage one another daily.” The Practice of the Week.

Three weeks ago you learned to listen to a man about something small. This morning you watched a room listen to one man about the largest thing he owns. On the twenty-second you will do it for your brothers — and they for you. Go say your verbs to five people. We meet again on March 1, with your sentence heard.

Wise Men Still Seek, Knowing Their Why's

WhyzMen • Rewire Retirement • Session 11 Participant Guide r10

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