

“Determining Your Calling” //

EQUIP: Leadership Forums //

January 2011

I am J.D., been here for 10 years;

Picture of leaders

Prayer

Each time we do this:

- I’ll have a topic or subject I’ll take you deeper into. They will range from ministry philosophy to deeper theological issues
- Cohorts and Electives

One of the top questions I get asked

First, I want to deal with What Calling IS NOT:

- **Necessarily a Burning Bush/Damascus Road/Warm Fuzzy Experience**
 - Driscoll’s call
 - Wasn’t mine... or **Charles Spurgeon’s**.
 - I’ve told you before... Spell it out in your **Cheerios?**
 - I never had a burning bush experience. The only time I’ve had bushes speak to me is at Southpoint.
 - That’s great and it happens, but not everyone in the Bible got a burning bush
- **A special instruction to live missionally**
 - Mentality that many of us have is that there is an elite group of us who are called to ministry, and the

rest of everybody should just make a living, go to church, and be nice

- Every disciple of Jesus is supposed to live their life missionally; to leverage their life for the Kingdom of God.
- The Great Commission is not a calling for some; it’s a mandate for all
- Think of it like a **movie**... who is the main character? We are asking specifics, God asks a more fundamental question. Is your life about you or God?
- We must all ask, *where can my talents best serve God’s kingdom?*
- Maybe we’ve invented the whole language of calling to mask the fact that most Christians never started living missionally like disciples.
- **An excuse to passively wait for God rather than actively pursue ministry**
 - We sit around waiting on God to tell us to do what He’s already told us to do! Many of the greatest movements in the Bible happened when God’s people were active, not passive, regarding opportunity
 - Examples...
 - God never told David...
 - John 6: he didn’t tell them what to do, he asked them, let them come up with a solution, and then called it a TEST. What was the test?
 - Many of us talk about finding God’s will. It’s not lost!
 - And, BTW, **NOTE:** *Number of female applicants going to Muslim countries outnumbers males 3:1; in a culture that is dominated by men and where it is dangerous, you’re telling me God is calling more men*

than women, Where are the men that will rise to this opportunity?

- So the question is no longer “if” to be involved in the Great Commission, but “where” and “how”

Before I lay out to you what calling is, let me deal an objection. You say, **Doesn't God speak to us and guide us? Aren't there legitimate burning bush experiences?**

- Yes, but Paul made most of his decisions without special revelation. For example, in Acts, Paul is explaining why he's going to a place and he says, rather tentatively... **“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (Acts 15:28-29)**. That doesn't sound like a guy who God spelled out in his Wheaties what he was supposed to do.
- **1 Corinthians 16:1-5**, In 1 Corinthians 16 Paul lays out his plans for the Corinthians like this: (v. 5, my paraphrase), “Yeah... when I arrive in Corinth, I'll see what everyone thinks about me going on to Jerusalem. I tried to get Apollos to come visit you, but he didn't think it was a good idea to do it now. For now, my plan is to come to you after I go through Macedonia. I'll probably stay awhile, maybe even the winter. I want to take my time, if the Lord permits. I'm also going to spend some time in Ephesus because there seems to be some great things God is doing there.”
- **Kevin DeYoung**, in a great little book called **Just Do Something**, makes this comment: **“You're not getting the sense that Paul got angelic visits every other day and waited for his dreams, visions of his heart, and supernatural messages written out in the clouds to tell him what to do. Most of Paul's decisions were made based on wisdom, not revelation...and getting revelation was the unexpected exception, not the rule.” Kevin DeYoung, Just Do Something**
- **God doesn't call out motionless objects; He steers moving ships.**

What calling IS:

Visual:

- **VENN DIAGRAM: Ability, affinity, Opportunity (or, need)**
 - Ability (what you're good at); affinity (what you're passionate about); need (where there is opportunity)
- Where I get this:
 - The study of Scripture and my own experience
 - Jim Collins: *Good to Great*, Hedgehog principle: (1) what they're good at (2) what they're passionate about, and (3) what there's a market for (need)
 - Tim Keller
 - I'll show you in a minute, Rick Warren. You know, I think the Bible says “in anything a business guru, a megachurch legend, a Baptist and a Presbyterian are agreed, it is settled in heaven.”
- I think this would apply to both spiritual and natural gifts
- Ability – How do you determine?
 - **You just know**
 - **Spiritual gift tests**
 - Limitations: (I have something personal against it... V's was celibacy) But also, they are based on self -knowledge, and self-knowledge is limited
 - **Me with Maxwell**. You're in college or grad school seminary – you probably haven't tried enough things to know what you're good at; try things, try a bunch of things
- Same with Affinity – the more you experience, the more you know what you like. And the more you grow in the gospel, the more God radically changes your desires (Vic as an example)

(This means, especially for you college, you should take your time, which is why one of our 2 year opps may be good for you... I'll come to that in a few minutes)

Rick Warren, from *Purpose Driven Life*

- Spiritual gifts
- Heart
- Abilities
- Passions
- Experiences:
 - **One of my favorite verses on this: Acts 26:16** *But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you.*
 - Paul's is the deluxe version. But based on this recounting, there are element in his that are true of all of our calling.
 - We each have been given an angle on Christ we are supposed to reveal; we are incomplete without each other.
 - Why you can journal; retreat... Not just for touchy feely people. To track God's movements and see patterns.

For many of you (most of you), your calling includes a secular vocation.

- Myth: all the spiritual, called people go into the ministry
- The majority of people have been given secular gifts
 - That is God's plan.
 - **Gen 2:** God put man in an undeveloped earth... The first command given to man. We were commanded to develop the raw materials of the earth for the glory of God and the care of others.
 - How we do that is "calling." That's where we get the word "vocation" = Latin, "voca," to call. Your vocation is your "calling."
 - *"When we pray the Lord's Prayer we ask God to 'give us this day our daily bread.' And He does give us our*

daily bread. He does it by means of the farmer who planted and harvested the grain, the baker who made the flour into bread, the person who prepared our meal." Martin Luther, in Gene Edward Veith, *God At Work*

- *"The idea that the service to God should have only to do with a church altar, singing, reading, sacrifice, and the like is without doubt but the worst trick of the devil. How could the devil have led us more effectively astray than by the narrow conception that service to God takes place only in a church and by the works done therein...The whole world could abound with the services to the Lord, Gottesdienste – not only in churches but also in the home, kitchen, workshop, field" – Martin Luther*
- Again, the Genesis 2 command is to develop the raw materials of the earth for the glory of God and the care of others.
 - How we do that is "calling." That's where we get the word "vocation" = Latin, "voca," to call. Your vocation is your "calling."
 - Here's an example I always use: Chariots of Fire, "I feel His pleasure."¹
 - At the same time, the GC was given to everyone. Everybody has to obey 2 commands:
 - Gen 2:
 - Matthew 28:19–20. This was given to the church.
 - So, here's a 2-part vision I'd encourage you to adopt: **Take what you're "called" to (good at, passionate about): a) do it well (to the glory of God); b) do it somewhere strategic** (for the mission of Jesus)
 - I am convinced... "The Next Wave of Missions":
 - Strong biblical support: The Bible indicates that the gospel got places faster on the wings of business than it did even by the Apostles *"And the brothers*

¹ The tearing down of distinctions distinctions between clergy and laity was one of the Reformation's key components that distinguished it from Roman Catholicism.

there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.” (Acts 28:15)

- Luke seems to go out of his way to show you that it was laypeople, not the Apostles, who were leading in the spread of the gospel... LONGEST SERMON, STEPHEN! *“And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles” (Acts 8:1)*
- Stephen Neill’s *History of Christian Missions*: none of the great cp centers were established by an Apostle. Alexandria; Antioch; even Rome
- Places most unreached are places that business; not seminary students, can reach
 - For examples, most unreached peoples are found in something missiologists refer to as the “10/40-Window.” These people are primarily Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist.
 - These are also countries – where you find the greatest concentration of the world’s poor.
 - You have unemployment ranges between 30 and 70%.
 - One source said that 50% or so of the population in those areas is young, under 20 years of age, and that unemployment rates are likely to soar in coming years.
 - Some estimates indicate that up to 2 billion young people will be looking for jobs over the next 20 years.²
- WE NEED...
 - Entrepreneurs; people to manage companies; businessmen in multinational corporations;

students to get jobs in places where we are doing this

- And, we need some of you to stay right here.
- So, again, here’s the vision **“Do it well (for glory of God); do it somewhere strategic (for the mission of God)!”**

“What do I do right now”?

Practical Steps (Gospel, p. 217)

- **Take advantage of opportunities:**
 - Explore, explore, explore (NOVA story)
 - **All: short term mission trips:** seeing what God is doing in another part of the world will help you see where your abilities and affinities meet the world’s need
 - **College students—Summer internships/2 year assignments:**
 - 2 silent, maybe even subconscious objections:
 - *What about getting married?* (Matthew 6:33; you’ll be much better ready)
 - “But I’ll get behind in my career.”
 - *Forbes magazine*
 - On a WW2 book reading kick... they left boys, they came back men. *I came back a different . I came back as a guy that had been tested in a bunch of different ways.*
 - *I’d dealt with persecution; loneliness; I had a newly forged commitment to the gospel, and I came back with a view toward the nations.*
- **Start with the needs right in front of you**
 - HOPUD; Internationals
 - Are of passion growing in you?
 - (to minister to the people right in front of you)

² From

http://www.lausanne.org/documents/BAMPaper_feb06.pdf

- **Be very involved with your church**
 - Plus, we, as a church body, have a corporate calling and you, as a member of that body, share in that calling. Os Guinness says, “The call of Jesus is personal but not purely individual...” (Os Guinness, *The Call*, 98–101). Don’t just look to yourself to determine your call; look to that body of people God has called you to be a part of.
 - Couples who can go with these teams we send out, so that we’re not just sending college students.
 - Plus, the church is God’s Plan A for speaking into your life
- **Keeping coming to these Forums** – we’ll develop you as a leader; develop your calling
 - **Businessman’s group**
 - Some of you are already sensing a call to go overseas – **get in a church planting cohort tonight** so we can equip you to fulfill God’s calling on your life

Conclusion:

- Your calling may not be as dramatic as Paul’s, but it is just as significant!
- My calling: 1.8 billion and kid on railroad tracks and my new prayer. It’s where I went from passive to active!
 - Never quit asking this question. Die with new dreams on your mind. Teach them to your kids. Like CALEB, who was still actively seeking mountains and not waiting for God.