

Live Your Calling Reflection

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### *Define your Calling*

As part of the *Life Calling Map*, it starts off with a verse that sets the tone for your life. For myself that verse is from Philippians 1:6, “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Before beginning to process the things in my own life, I had assumed that I needed to be the one to make the decisions and choices in my life. After doing it for so long, I realized through my failures that I did not allow space for God and his will. So, my primary calling is to be loved by the Father and to let him lead me in life according to his will. Secondary calling is to be a family man, a pastor, and a mentor. My mission is to serve my future wife and family in a way that honors God, to lead others to the love of the Father, and finally to invest in leaders who will take the next stage.

In terms of skills, I prefer to do administrative working including analyzing, evaluating, solving problems, research and organizing. In addition to that I also enjoy mentoring skills such as advising, listening, and coaching. The values that I prioritize include achievement, innovation, knowledge, teamwork, and working alone. These all fall under the personality trait ISTJ where the dominant quality is an abiding sense of responsibility to do what needs to be done. There is a character of commitment to work with an emphasis on an ability to organize as an effective manager.

Currently my interests include communication, food and cooking, media, plants and gardening, and music. Although they seem disconnected, I feel that they would give useful in building relationship and trust. Specifically, music and food, they seem to be a universal means to communication which is something that I am quite interested in. Often it is through these connection and interactions that bring opportunities for the future.

My giftings from highest to lowest are administration, teaching and shepherding. All of these are in line with the calling that God has for me. With no surprise, they are all integrated with what I am currently doing in my ministry and what I want to do in the future

After looking at the results, I am certain that the direction I am on is in line with my calling. Many ways I believe is difficult to communicate a calling especially when you have yet to process the implication for the plans that God has for you. This book has been helpful in understanding the details of my calling and how each aspect is interconnected.

*How does this impact how you are currently doing ministry?*

#### Setting Up for the Next Stage

The opportunities that God has given me during my time in seminary has been setting me up for the next stage of my ministry. Coming in, I had no idea where it would lead me or what I would do, but that image has become clearer for me. First, I was given opportunities to preach at different churches in the Northeast region of the Vietnamese district. At this time, I had yet to take any communication or preaching course, but God revealed to me a joy for public speaking. I am not one to put myself out there as I am an introverted person, but God gave me a sense of peace and joy in sharing his words to others. Even in my opportunities to internship, I was given a chance to work administratively to assess the situation and to bring new ideas to the table. Growing up in the Vietnamese church, it was difficult to pave a way for change, but God showed me how effective communication was needed to share my thoughts to a generation that does not understand my perspective. All these skills that I am learning and practicing are helping me towards my calling.

#### Grieving the Present

Many skills that I am practicing for my calling are all disconnected because they are used at various locations and are not interconnected. But I know that one day, they will all be used to

serve God in a localized area. With this in mind I know that my current situation is simply a steppingstone to what God has next for me. In processing my thoughts, there will be some time needed for me to grieve that present and to be prepared for what is next.

*What implications does this calling have for future leading in a church or ministry?*

Job

Again, as I stated earlier, I know that my next job will be a pastoral position in the Vietnamese CM&A. I have already submitted my application to the district and am awaiting their call. Everything that I am learning about myself and this process of understanding my calling has helped me to see a clear picture of what is to come. Looking at my skill set, I realize that these are not all necessary for all churches. However, the environment that I will be in is within a liminal space where organization will be key. Administratively, it is difficult when there is no set standard of doing ministry especially when everyone is willing to go with the flow just because the previous generation did the same. In this position, a foundation has to be laid down for there to be space to organize for the future of the second-generation ethnic churches.

Family

Having a family is not an easy task, but it is a reality when you have plans to be married. Being in college I never thought about marriage until I was bombarded by my parents asking if I was dating anyone. I'll be honest and admit that I have yet to process what that will look like. I am sure that many have an image that they have created in their minds about a married life. But often, it is disconnected from reality. What exactly is the image of a perfect family, a white picket fence, children, happiness? And if these do not come to fruition, then would it still be considered a family. Currently I am in the process of getting engaged to my soon to be fiancé, and these are the topics I think about. My reality of a single man is coming to a close, and soon I will be with my wife let alone our children. But this is a part of my calling, to show love to my

wife and family just as God loved me first. Not only will this affect me personally, but it will affect the way I will lead the church and my ministry. The realities that one faces at home are connected to the how one will lead a church.

### Building Relationships

Communication is a key characteristic on my calling. I find myself interested in the process of speaking and conveying ideas and thoughts to others. But another key aspect of communication is listening. In ministry, if there is too much focus on the results, then there is no understanding of the why. This is why listening is critical in building relationships with others. It is impossible for a church to run with only a man. It is through the integral relationship of different body parts that allow a body to move. Without a part whether small or large will bring dysfunction to the body. Currently, I simply work with pastors as I am needed for their church, but soon, I will need to prepare to build relationship with the people of the church that I am called to. It is through communication that allows an understanding even if there is a disagreement of thoughts. But more importantly, it is communication that allows the church to be in unity with one another

*What needs to change in your life to align yourself with this calling?*

### Organization

Preaching at different locations has given me more freedom to choose what I will do. Often times, there are already set passages given to me to preach from that keeps me from the trouble of finding one. However, being a pastor will require me to organize all of these in advance being the overseer of the ministry. This is something that I have not yet experienced because of the limitation of not having specifically responsibilities to a church. In advanced communication, the professor did a lecture on planning for the future specifically with sermons. He explained that he would take a week off to prepare the sermon topics for the entire year. I

cannot imagine what that will look like and it seems like a daunting task to do. Even now, there are times when I procrastinate with the sermons I preach. I will have to realign my schedule to be more organized especially when I work with a church in the future. Being spontaneous is not responsible for the calling that God has for me.

#### Awareness of Family Relationships

Having more responsibilities means that I will need to be aware of how that will affect my family. Many have certain expectation for what a married life will be. But in a pastoral position, there will be times when you have to minister over family responsibilities. I have seen how ministry has affect a married couple in a negative way. For my future wife, I need to have conversations with her a communicate certain realities of being a pastor's wife. I realize that this is not something that any person is prepared to do, rather is must also be a calling that God has on their life.

**References:**

Brennfleck, K., & Brennfleck, K. M. (2005). *Live your calling: A practical guide to finding and fulfilling your mission in life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.