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Live Your Calling Reflection

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Define your Calling

The book, *Live Your Calling A Practical Guide to Finding and Fulfilling Your Mission in Life* by Kevin and Kay Marie Brennfleck, was a helpful resource in identifying what can best describe me as an INTJ (introvert, intuition, thinking, judging) personality type. As an ordained licensed Evangelist in October 2010, being termed an introvert was not surprising considering that my spiritual gifts include faith and wisdom. I often spend long periods internalizing events, situations, and coming up with accurate conclusions.

There was no history of ministers or pastors within my family prior to my generation, but there was a strong presence of faith. This is understandable to me as I reflect on a Family Bible heirloom that has recorded information verifying that I am a third generation free African American through my maternal Great-Grandfather who was born April 1861. At the age of 12 during my youth, children were required to join church without being given a lot of information. Therefore, it was many years later before I remembered hearing about or receiving salvation. I do not remember how salvation was taught during my formative years, but church attendance was required. I attended Sunday school regularly and was a member of the Junior Choir. I enjoyed looking at the pictures of angels, Biblical figures, and dramatic events in the Family Bible although I did not understand them. It produced a lot a questions for me and I was compelled to seek God for answers.

After moving to New York, I found employment working in city government for over thirty-five years. Being led by the Spirit I enrolled in Bible School where I also received the filling of the Holy Spirit. My key Scripture verse is, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that

are bruised (Luke 4:18 KJV).” My spiritual development continued after becoming affiliated with a local church and became active in several ministries such as the Usher Board, Missionaries and Willing Workers. Having served faithfully for many years, I was asked to join the Deaconess Ministry, so I was consecrated as a deaconess (women were not considered as a deacon). As a deaconess I taught Sunday School, ministered to women, led prayer shut-ins, helped with water baptism and visited the sick (home, hospital, nursing home) and ministered to the incarcerated. My mission is to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. The top spiritual gifts that I possess according to the Life Calling Map are evangelism, encouragement, helps, and intercession. I would like to develop administrative, leadership and hospitality gifts in a volunteer or ministry capacity. After eleven years in ministry at that church I was released by the pastor to go to another ministry, because women are not allowed to become ministers. My quest to continue the spiritual journey God has for me has deepened in the last two years.

My last full-time employment was working in a small unit with very good pay and fringe benefits; however it was not fulfilling in a way that I was able to be of service to help others. I began to pray for another job assignment but for years, my position and assignment remained the same. The marketplace prohibited open discussions of faith; therefore I was only able to witness through my walk and share my faith with those that would occasionally ask questions. I discovered that my greatest joy while working in public service involved performing duties that related to services for children or for families in crises, and for those seeking employment.

Miraculously an opportunity became available while working on the job permitting me to go into the field to offer services for people impacted by hurricane Sandy. As a nurturer and mentor, the ability to offer support and encouragement was an opportunity to use gifts that enabled me to define my life’s calling. I would like to develop skills in recruitment that would cultivate skills of friendship, helping others and influencing people.

As an ordained licensed Evangelist, I served (pre-pandemic) as a volunteer involved with the New York State Correction and Community Services Program where we ministered to the spiritual needs of the incarcerated. This required going inside a facility providing spiritual care and guidance to offenders. The Bible tells us that Jesus said, “I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me [with help and ministering care]; I was in prison, and you came to Me [ignoring personal danger]” (Matthew 25:34 Amplified Bible). When I relocated, the new church did not use the title Evangelist. I was able to operate in ministry performing duties as a teacher, ministering to the sick and shut-in, and counseling women that came for advice.

My internship at a woman’s emergency intake shelter gave me the opportunity to develop and utilize skills in pastoral care. That was a very humbling, satisfying, and rewarding experience as I was being of service to those that were in crisis situations. We are called to serve as Jesus proclaimed. Not knowing where God was leading me I was able by faith to live the key Bible scripture verse for ministry that supports my calling: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and the recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free (Luke 4:18).” The good news to the broken hearted is to share the love of Jesus Christ despite the hurts and pains that someone may be experiencing or have experienced from life’s circumstances and events. Pre-pandemic ministry in the community included visiting the nursing homes to have fellowship with those that were unable to get to their house of worship, yet they desired to attend service. Within my current church community, I am a minister-in-training and the chairperson for the Justice Ministry. Due to the pandemic most church activities are not operating therefore, I am praying and seeking God for directions for the ministry moving forward.

My spiritual calling is helping to give emotional or spiritual support where needed or asked for. Often family members and friends came to me for advice or wanted me to listen to

their concerns. Helping others gave me great joy especially when they asked for prayer or were willing to accept prayer when I extended the offer at the end of the conversation. I enjoyed connecting people that needed services such as jobs, housing, or medical care with various resources. This presented me the opportunity to utilize skills that I developed over the years while working in city government.

The Life Calling Map confirmed that I am to keep my family covered in prayer and mentor them based on biblical principles when they seek me for advice. Again, with the pandemic raging throughout the community, churches have not been receiving monetary support however, I continue to pray for and support the church financially. I concur that the outcome was great in helping me stay on task to fulfill my calling of helping others as they circumvent through the labyrinth of life.

How does this impact how you are currently doing ministry?

I was recently assigned to the position of chairperson for the Justice Ministry when the pandemic hit. The original goal was to minister to the incarcerated and their families. Being the new leader, the transition was not easy because there were no written records to receive. Therefore, I have been in prayer seeking wisdom from God how to set-up and carry out the vision and goal that He would have for the ministry.

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

My calling to evangelize to those in prison is a God ordained mandate knowing that when we do this it is one of the commissions that is stated in the Bible as doing it unto Jesus. Therefore as the body of Christ we are to extend the same grace to the incarcerated that was extended to us. We read about various accounts in the Old Testament about how God used Joseph, Samson, Jeremiah, and Daniel. In the New Testament, we read about how God used John the Baptist,

Peter, James, Silas and other men that had been in prison for various reasons to reveal His power and will.

I would like to develop hospitality skills so I can introduce a program called Alpha. Alpha is a program that introduces the basic of the Christian faith to non-believers.

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

I believe that I am walking in my calling, but I will continue to develop some of the gifts when we can return to our house of worship. In the meantime, I will also continue to pray and prepare through learning various principles that will be used to build the ministry according to God's order. I will work toward fulfilling the mission of the church through the Justice Ministry for the incarcerated and their families as mandated from the Bible.

References:

Brennfleck, Kevin, and Kay Marie Breenfleck . *Live Your Calling A Practicial Guide to Finding and Fulfilling Your Mission in Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.