FIND YOUR CALLING

DEREK SANFORD
RESOURCES

A Resource for Volunteer Leaders

Pastor Derek Sanford

This resource was designed to lead you through a series of scriptures and questions that will help you piece together the calling that God has placed on your life. This isn't a magic formula with guaranteed results. Ultimately your calling needs to be worked out between you and God. This resource will hopefully posture you to have that conversation with Him. It is important too, to acknowledge that if this calling is going to be worked out within your local church, a conversation needs to be had with your pastoral leadership. You are first and foremost a servant of God. So if you say, "Pastor my calling is Y" and he/she says, "that's fine but right now our greatest need is Z," then serve in Z. Often a specific assignment is the greatest preparation for our calling. And learning to be a follower the greatest preparation for being a leader.

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS ON CALLING

1. Every Christian has been both SAVED and CALLED

- First God saves you then He calls you. When there is one, there has to be the other.
- Calling is not something reserved for pastors and missionaries – it is true for every Christian

Ephesians 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

2. God specializes in using ORDINARY PEOPLE.

- God doesn't call the most talented – the most spiritual – the most popular. He has always used an amazing collection of very ordinary people.
- He says below in 1 Corinthians 1, you were NOT wise, NOT influential, NOT born to the right family – but God used you anyway.
-

1 Corinthians 1:26-27

*Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. **NOT** many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.*

3. The foundation of God's calling is a WILLING HEART

- A calling is not first and foremost about skill or talent or even fit, it's about a surrendered heart to what God has for you.
- We get very caught up in the 'measurables' – the 'externals' – we worry that we won't 'check all the boxes' – but God looks beyond all of that.
- When God sent Samuel to anoint a king for Israel, Samuel was impressed with Eliab and all the older boys because they looked very impressive. But God would later choose David – the youngest. Here was God's lesson to Samuel when it comes to God's calling:

1 Samuel 16:7

Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

4. God doesn't CALL the EQUIPPED, he EQUIPS the CALLED.

- He doesn't wait for us to get all cleaned up before He'll use us. He puts us in the game first and then he equips us for the task at hand.
- The disciples were thrown into ministry far too soon -according to our sensibilities!

Hebrews 13:20-21

Now the God of peace will … [21] equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight.

TIME OF PRAYER

Having processed through these passages on calling. Grab a piece of paper and pen. And spend some time in listening prayer. Jot down any words or phrases or images that come to your mind as you pray related to what God might be calling you to next.

SHAPE: FACTORS THAT DETERMINE YOUR CALLING

Saddleback Church has provided a great framework to think about your specific calling. It comes in the acronym SHAPE which stands for Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences. This promotes a wholistic approach to how God calls people. I have found that one of these 5 things will usually 'take the lead' when it comes to your calling. In other words, one of your life experiences [E] might have been overcoming alcoholism sometime in your past. That experience may 'take the lead' in your calling. You may be called to work with alcoholics. If that has been your experience, plus your spiritual gift (S) is leadership – you might lead an entire ministry for those addicted to alcohol. But if your gift is encouragement, you might be a sponsor for just one person. If your spiritual gift is helps you might set up chairs for the 12-Step Ministry that meets in your church. If one of your natural abilities (A) is public speaking you might travel around to different support groups to share your story. You can see how your EXPERIENCE took the lead but the other factors may determine the specifics of how your calling plays out. Let's walk through the SHAPE acronym answering a question at the end of each one.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: God has given every believer at least one supernatural gift at the point of their conversion. If you've never taken a gifts assessment, you can take one for free at www.whoisgrace.com/coreclass But, the key question that you need to answer is:

What has God GIFTED me to do? _____

HEART: There are certain things that you are passionate about more than others. It could be fighting poverty, a love of football or rock music, it could be a passion for investing in kids. The key question you need to answer is

What do I LOVE to do? _____

ABILITIES: These are special skills you've honed along the way either from hobbies, career training, your home life, or other involvements. Maybe you have gotten vocational training in management, or using Microsoft software, or you tinker around fixing cars in your garage, or you write poetry. The question is

What natural TALENTS and SKILLS do I have? _____

PERSONALITY: Personality can be defined as a combination of 1) how you are energized (introvert/extrovert) and 2) how you are organized (structured/unstructured). Answer,

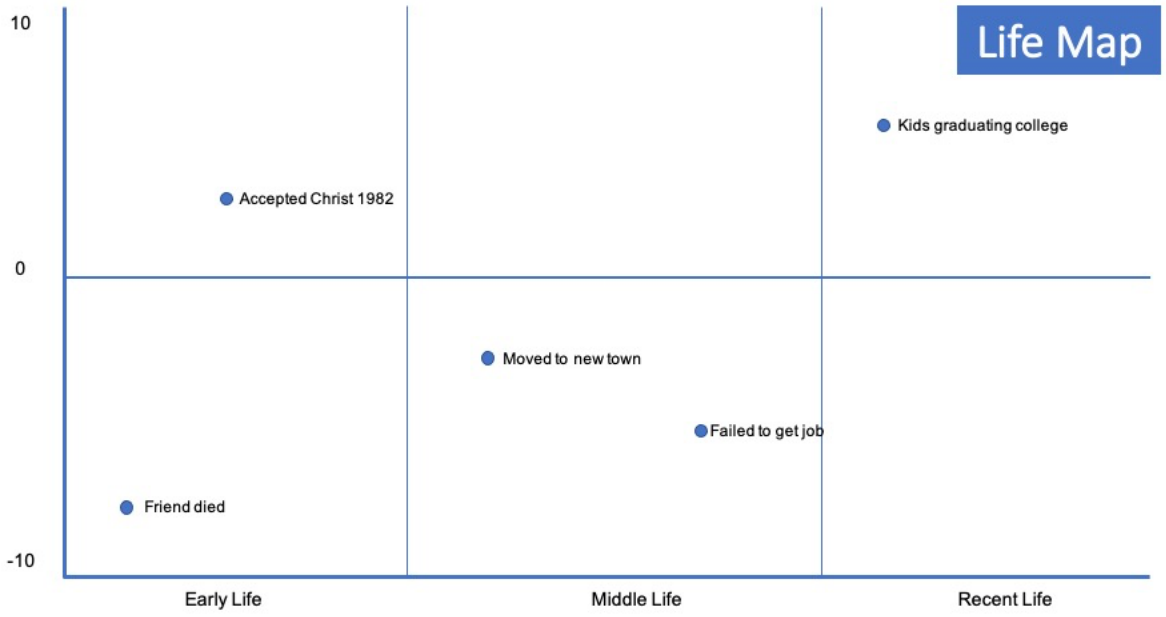
How am I WIRED to serve? _____

EXPERIENCES: God has brought you through a lot in your life. You have had spiritual experiences, educational, family, and personal experiences. You have had seasons of growth along with pain and suffering. God uses these experiences to shape your calling. List out,

What has God BROUGHT ME THROUGH? _____

LIFE MAP

A life map can help you to chart the high points, low points, heroes, and defining moments of your life from childhood to present. Use a piece of paper or a posterboard to create a simple chart. (You can go as in-depth as you'd like). Use the bottom of the page to track your life stage. The bottom left corner is when you were born, and the bottom right corner is your present. Divide it into three sections – early life / middle life/ and recent life. The left vertical axis is a series of numbers that range from -10 (most negative events in your life) in the bottom left corner up to +10 (most positive events in your life) in the top left corner. The middle value (0) is neutral. Try to think of high and low life events in each of the three sections, and to what degree they were negative or positive. Place a dot on the page for each event and label it.



It can be helpful to brainstorm on another piece of paper before you begin:

- What were my high points?
- What were my low points?
- What were my defining moments?
- Who were my heroes?

When you've completed the chart, ask and answer the following questions:

Are there any repeated patterns and themes? _____

Can you locate the origination of any deep beliefs (about yourself, God, or others)? _____

Can you identify life values (these values often emerge from painful events)? _____

INTERESTS

God has given you a unique set of passions that get fired up when you encounter activities, subjects, or circumstances that interest You. You instinctively feel deeply about some things and not about others. This God-given motivation serves as an internal guidance system for your life. It determines what your interests are, and what will bring you the most satisfaction and fulfillment. It also motivates you to pursue certain activities, subjects, and environments. It's important to understand these interests because it will help to shape your calling. Answer the following questions:

What have you done in your life that you're most proud of?

_____

What stirs up righteous anger in you? Where is your holy discontent?

_____

What brings you the most happiness or joy?

_____

What would you attempt if you knew you wouldn't fail?

_____

Is there a cause, age group, life circumstance, community issue, or a world problem that fires you up?

_____

CHURCH

The temptation is to make one's calling hyper-individualized. But the truth is a Christian's calling is most often meant to be lived out in the context of a local church. Remember, when Jesus announced His plan for healing the world, it didn't involve starting a political party, an economic system, an educational model, or a non-profit. He started the church, a disciple-making enterprise. So, one of the very best things you can do with your calling is to see how it fits in your church's vision.

Have you ever been involved in ministry before? If so, which aspect of ministry did you love? Which aspect did you NOT enjoy?

_____

Which church ministries most interest you? (rank below)

_____ **ENGAGEMENT:** helping people to get connected in small group participation and leadership, helping new attendees to get connected through hospitality. Greeting and follow-up, or visiting and caring for those in the church who are in need of special attention.

_____ **SPIRITUAL GROWTH –** helping people to find spiritual maturity, biblical understanding and application, discipleship and mentoring, teaching, prayer, or supporting others in love through counseling and healing ministries.

_____ **SERVING -** helping people discover and apply their God-given gifts, helping with practical ministry needs and hands-on projects within the church.

_____ **OUTREACH -** sharing God's love with those outside the church through word and deed, encouraging others to share the Gospel, supporting church sponsored events in our community, inner city ministry, helping the poor and needy, overseas missions support.

_____ **WORSHIP -** engaging others in learning how to worship God through music, video, audio/visual, and stage support, communicating God's love through writing and poetry.

_____ **FINANCES –** helping people find financial freedom and the joy of generosity, or helping the church with budgeting, accounting, data entry, and other fiscal needs,

_____ **COMMUNICATION/ ADMINISTRATION –** provide communication systems and tools to the church including writing, proofreading, editing, web and graphic design, social media, content creation, search engine optimization, data entry, mailing and copying.

_____ **NEXT GEN –** helping children, youth, and young adults to know that they matter to God. Teaching, mentoring, leading a small group, event planning, set up and tear down.

MY KEY INSIGHTS

Go back through each section of this exercise and pull in key insights that you gleaned along the way. These insights might be about yourself, about God, about the calling that he's placed on your life. Jot down any insights below so that they're all in one place

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS	
TIME OF PRAYER	
SHAPE	
LIFE MAP	
INTERESTS	
CHURCH	

Now that you've processed this information it's time to take a next step. What is the step that God is calling you to take? It's always best to put these kinds of steps into a statement of commitment:

I will _____ by _____.
(next step) (date)