



Calling, Separation, and Discerning your call

In this teaching, I will share and help examine the differences between calling, separation, and discerning your call. Each of us has a call on our lives. We need to know it, discern it, and we have to be separated unto that call.

Calling

This is a stage when one knows there is a certain call of God on their lives, but they are not certain what it. They then begin to discover, seek, serve as they get to do multiple things in ministry or church. At this stage of the calling is the, it is a time to learn to:

- Assist others already a head of you as an assistant.
- Serve others without pay nor expectation.
- Learn to walk in the Spirit.
- Be faithful in whatever we have been entrusted to do.
- Be proved and tested.
- grow in our relationship with God and His Word.
- Time for maturing, mortifying the flesh, and its ungodly desires.
- A time for narrowing down what our passions are.

At this stage, many who are in a hurry tend to quit their full-time jobs at this time thinking they have to in order to fulfill their calling. This would be too soon in many cases because they are discovering.

Acts 13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

- a) Acts 13:5 And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as *their* assistant. NKJV
 - i) This version reveals that the John Mark was their **assistant**.
- b) It seems John Mark was not excited about being an assistant/minister because he soon abandoned his post and job.
 - i) If you are called into the ministry you will start in unseen and often thankless jobs. In these places character, integrity, and humility is built. **Servanthood comes before promotion.**
 - ii) Don't abandon ship! If you stay faithful you can get promoted to captain, the ship! —Rick McFarland

A. Paul's Call

- a) Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
 - i) This verse clearly shows that Paul was **called** and separated. We will be seeing that calling and separating are not synonymous.
- b) 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,
 - i) Paul was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ.
 - ii) This was the will of God for his life. It is not the will of God for everyone. Callings on each one's lives are very different. It is not a copy paste thing or preference. God is the one who calls.
- c) Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

- i) We must be called to the ministry. Paul was called by God, and he knew it. He was not self-appointed.
 - o Notice that God does the calling.
 - o When God Calls us, we will know it.
- ii) We should never venture out before we know WHO has called us. This makes a difference especially during difficult times.
- iii) What is God's call on your life?
 - o First let us define life. What is life? Life is fulfilling God's call and purpose for your life. Life is more than achievements, family or profession. One major difference between success and failure as defined by the kingdom is whether God called you or not. If you are not called, you will not succeed in the definition of the Kingdom of God.
 - o When we know the call on our lives, we should take time and get **trained and equipped**. It is important to be trained once you recognize God's call on your life. It could be through some Bible training courses, internships, or apprenticeship. You sure don't want the school of hard knocks. I don't recommend it.
- iv) Once we have known our call. We need to be bold and unashamed of our call. It is not prideful to acknowledge your office or call. Be assured and persuaded of your calling.
 - o "Apostle". This word means "the sent one with authority and a message."
- v) Unfortunately, many have already left. They are **"went ones."**

They also left without authority and a message. In many cases, the went ones have not authority and message. They left before they were sent. We need to be sent before we go.

B. Jeremiah' call

a) Jeremiah 1:4-10 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

i) Jeremiah was called, ordained, and anointed of the Lord and he knew it.

C. Isaiah

a) Isaiah 49:1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

i) God calls us from the mother's womb, but we do not instantly discover and know that call.

D. More than fivefold

a) God's call for your life is not always a fivefold (Ephesians 4:11-12) equipping offices or gifts.

i) Before we are called to the equipping office, God will call us to the body offices (1 Corinthians 12:28-31) first—which are the kind of gifts that are the ones used to minister to the body.

- b) Many people aspire and desire to go as high as possible, greater heights, positions but little do they know that God has set specific ceilings, places, and heights to which they can go—or were created to get to.
 - i) We must find out how high God wants us to go and stay there and be satisfied and the max in those areas God has put us into.
- c) We need to be content with whatever call God has put on our lives. To many people, it is the other mountains of influence besides the **Religion & Faith**; such as **Family; Education; Government (Politics) & Law; Media, News & Commentary; Arts & Entertainment**; and **Business & Economics**.

E. Seasons

- a) On the other hand, God's call for our lives may involve different seasons. Seasons can change, not necessarily the call. It is not a change of a call so speak, but rather a change of a season to step into another facet, phase, or dimension of your call.

Separation

One thing that is key in separation than the calling is the **time factor**. There is a time gap or lapse between the calling and the separation to that calling. **During the time gap between calling and separation is when preparation and ministry training occurs.**

A. Paul and Silas

Acts 13:1-3 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

- a) Many believers have the call on their lives, and they know it, but few have been separated into that office or call.
- b) The biggest difference between calling and separation is TIME. We need to be separated to the call God has on our lives.
- c) Note that **you cannot be separated into the call you do not know or have**. Paul knew the call he was being separated unto. God had already revealed it to him. It was no surprise.

B. Time, Geographical place, and group of people

There are boundaries to our callings, and they are not obstacles to get around. They are not an obstacle challenge. Some obstacles aren't not meant to get around but to stop you. Each call and separation we will ever be called unto has a time, place, and a group of people. We are not called to reach everyone in every place at all the time. No man is the full manifestation of God. No one is every mans' cup of tea.

- a) We are more fruitful doing **what** God has called us to do, **where** He has called us and to **whom** (the people), He has called us to.
 - i) Whenever we do what God has not called us to do, we open ourselves up to a lot of problems.
 - ii) Most of the problems we are facing are because we are not doing what God has called us to do.
 - iii) We are driving in the wrong lane.
- b) We were not anointed to reach every single person or group of people at a certain time and place.
- c) We need to stay in our calling lane, time, people, and place.
- d) Our call has limits. We need to use our gifting within the right boundaries of place (geographical calling), people (a group of people calling), and time.

Place or Geographical location

Every Christian must have a passport. Every believer must be travelling to different parts of the world, right? Wrong. The commission to go into all the world was unto the church in general but not to you specifically. We lessen our impact trying to reach the world.

Acts 16:6-7 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

- a) This could easily have been a geographical location issue. This was not their territory or geographical calling.
- b) Sometimes our challenge is down to spherical influence, and we need to know it so that you are not a fish out of water lest we die slowly.

Acts 22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

- a) Paul was witnessing to a rock. It was not going to yield any fruit. His testimony was not going to be received.
- b) We need to be open to a lane change. As we spot danger ahead, we might experience a lane change.

Group of people

We all have the temptation to try to think that we are called to minister to our own people. This is not to say that we should not say a word to them, but we need to be careful not to think we are called to those people because they are our people. Notice what Paul says here in Acts 20:21, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." A deeper study reveals that Paul was called to the Gentiles as the priority.

Acts 16:6-7 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

- a) God forbade Paul and Silas to preach the Word. Who would have thought so? Well, there are times where the Lord will do so for multiple reasons. People might not be ready to receive, we might be too early, we might be in a wrong place, and we might be trying to reach a wrong people.
- b) Not only did the Holy Spirit stop them from preaching the Word in Asia, He also suffered them not to go into Bithynia.
 - i) Acts 22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.
- c) Peter got in trouble when he was trying to reach the Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-12).
- d) Paul was called to the Gentiles while Peter was called specifically to the Jews.
 - i) If we go to where God has not called us as regards to people, place, and time, we will be frustrated.
 - ii) We will not be fruitful as we ought to be.
 - iii) Paul got in a lot of problems trying to reach people God did not call him to. (Acts 20).
- e) Acts 21:19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought **among the Gentiles by his ministry.**

Time/ Timing

We need to learn to discern the timing of the call of God on our lives. We need to wait for the green light. Not all No's mean the same. There is a NO—not anymore, NO—not yet, and a NO—never.

Paul got born again and straight away started to preach. It did not go well. It was too early. There is a timing to the call of God on our lives and the launching out into our giftings.

Paul did not stop there, he attempted to join himself to the disciples. Notice he was joining himself. It was not the Lord who was doing this. This was Paul's effort and did not yield enough fruit.

Acts 9:20-31 "And **straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues**, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and **confounded the Jews** which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took **counsel to kill him**: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. **Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.**

And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, **he attempted to join himself to the disciples**: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the **Grecians**: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." (Emphasis and Underline Mine)

- a) First, he started preaching too soon. The timing was off.
- b) Two, he was busy arguing with the Greek speaking Jews (Grecians), yet he was not called to the Jews.

- i) Acts 21:19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought **among the Gentiles by his ministry.**
- ii) Acts 21:27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

C. David's 20 years journey to the throne

- a) David's way to the throne took time and was step by step. He took 20 years to see the full manifestation of God's call on his life.
- b) Most scholars estimate David to have been about 17 years old when he was first initially anointed king over Israel by Samuel in 1 Samuel 16.
- c) 2 Samuel 5:4 says that he was thirty years old when he began to reign over Judah, which would mean that he waited about 13 years to begin his reign.
 - i) Even then, **he did not yet reign over all of Israel, but only over his tribe of Judah.**
 - ii) It also took another 7.5 years of reigning over Judah before he reigned over all of Israel from Jerusalem.
- d) So, in total, it took about **twenty years** for David to see the call of God on his life as King over Israel come to fruition.
 - i) David took twenty years preparing, or being prepared, for a forty-year reign as king over Israel. We must prepare and be patient.
- e) God's call for us is gradual and happens in phases and steps.

Discerning your call

- A. God does not show you His whole plan for your life all at once.

a) There are two main reasons for that:

- i) You might become impatient and go out before time. e.g., Moses
- ii) You will be afraid, fearful, and you might run the other direction e.g., Jonah.

b) God will reveal His will step by step.

- i) David—First ruled Judah and Benjamin for 7.5 years and then became king over all Israel ruling in Jerusalem.

c) He will give you obtainable goals to encourage you, give you experience and momentum.

d) You would not be content with the process if you knew the end. There would be little motivation.

B. How do you discern God's call in your life?

a) Romans 12:1-2

- i) Be a living Sacrifice
- ii) Renew your mind
- iii) Seek first the Kingdom of God

b) Delight yourself in the Lord

Psalm 37:3-5 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

- i) Delight yourself in the Lord is first.
- ii) He then puts His desires in your heart.

- iii) You can now discern God's will for your life based on your desires, but the **condition** is that you must be **delighting yourself in the Lord**.
 - o He will change your want to, to His want to "s" by placing His desires in your heart as you seek Him and put Him first.
- iv) If you have a desire towards any direction, one of the ways to discern the Lord in it or not is that you just put it on the self and begin to pray about it.
 - o If the desire increases, chances are it is God and if the desire decreases, it is not Him.
 - o If it is God, it is not going to go away in 15 minutes for instance. As you pray and seek God, if it gets stronger and stronger, it is most probably God.
- c) Trial and error
 - i) Do whatever godly task or service that is available first. First John, 2nd John, and 3rd John (cleaning the restroom).
 - o Try it and see if you like it.
 - o God will speak to you and guide you as you are in motion, doing something.
- d) Questions to help you discern your call, gifting, and purpose.
 - i) What does God enable you to do? In what do you flow supernaturally?
 - ii) Where does God's anointing flow in your life?
 - o You will find that there is an stronger anointing in one thing more than another.
 - iii) If it is His will, you will love doing it. It does not mean it will be easy and effortless so to speak.
 - iv) Go out and try different things.

- v) Find out what you have passion for, is there any satisfaction in what you are doing?
- vi) If money were not a barrier, what would you rather do? What would you rather spend it on?
- vii) What would you like to see change out in the world or ministry?
- viii) What rubs you the wrong way and you would want to do a thing about it to change it?
 - o The bottom line is your call will excite, bless, and satisfy you.
- e) Another word for call is purpose. From John Maxwell's book, **"Good leaders ask great questions"** — Ask yourself the following to help you narrow down your purpose:
 Another word for call is purpose. From John Maxwell's book, **"Good leaders ask great questions"**
 - o What makes me sing? The answer reveals what brings you joy.
 - o What makes me cry? The answer reveals what touched your heart.
 - o What makes me dream? The answer reveals what sparks your imagination.
 - o What makes me excel? The answer reveals your strengths.
 - o What makes you different? The answer reveals your uniqueness.
- f) Finally, once you discover it, stay in your lane. Stick to what God has called you to do. You can't do everything even if you may have been told that since your childhood. No, **YOU CANNOT DO ANYTHING!**

Pastor Greg Mohr, an anointed minister of the Word of God who I also consider a God's General, said it this way: ***"Your weakness is another person's opportunity. Do not spend most of your time working bettering your weakness—gifts."***

- g) What area of service have you seen?

- Most fruit
- Bless others most
- Enjoy the most
- Things you do that bring positive comments, where in your service to others do you sense God's pleasure the most.

Serving others becomes a laboratory of learning what you are good at or not. It is through the process of elimination that you arrive to the place of your best gifting.

h) Focus on those:

- Develop them
- Give yourself to them

i) Peace of God—Let peace, passion, and the desires of your heart guide you

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

- i) Peace cannot be counterfeited.
- ii) What do you have the most peace about? God, am I missing anything?
- iii) Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.
- iv) Like the cloud in the OT, when it moves, we must move. Where the cloud is there is peace.
 - Numbers 9:16-18 So it was alway: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents.

- j) Following the Call of God?
 - i) You will reach your maximum potential
 - ii) You will love doing it.
- k) Some of the callings and gifts from God
 - i) Ephesians 4:11
 - ii) Romans 12:4-8
 - iii) 1 Corinthians 12:38-29
 - iv) 1 Corinthians 12:5-10
 - o No matter where you have been and done, you have not disqualified yourself. Romans 11:29. We all have something to contribute.
 - o God has never had anyone qualified working for Him, and you will not be the first one.

Purpose

Ecclesiastes 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
Ecclesiastes 3:17 I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

- a) For every purpose that God has called you to, there is attached a season and a time. You need to understand this reality, or else you will stay doing a thing that God has called you to move away from.
 - i) This will look different from person to person.
 - ii) One of the reasons many people do not recognize the season and times is because they are either insecure or ignorant.

Find your call and be content

Many believers desire to go as high and far above as they can in their positions, careers, and influence but little do they know that their definitive ceilings or limits to where God would have them. We need to identify those limits or ceilings and be content. We should know God's will and be content with it.

In a football team, all players cannot be we all cannot be strikers or quarterbacks. You have to find your place on the team, stay in it, and be the best you can be.

Some have tried to identify their call through what they have a burden for. There is a place for that, but if **all** you have is a burden, you will be a **burden**, but if you have a call, you will be a **blessing**. Find your call and follow that, then only will you be a blessing, and will you make a godly difference.

- a) Stick to your gifting. Stay in your sweet spot. Stay in your lane.
 - i) Your call is your strength zone. That is where you will operate stronger as you rely on the Lord.
- b) Do not delegate your calling to other people.
- c) You cannot be **all** things to **all** people. Remember this, NO ONE is EVERYONE's cup of tea. Focus on the good part!

Not everything you are good at...

Here is something the Lord has taught me. Not everything you are good at, enjoy or passionate about is God's purpose for your life. Everyone is good at multiple things, but that

does not mean that those things are God's call on one's life. We need to discover our one thing and stick to it. I am decent at certain things such as sports and I can do fairly okay on a worship band, but that does not mean all these things represent God's purpose and call on my life. I love these things, but they are not what God has called me to do. I know deep down in my heart that the Lord has called me and anointed me to teach His Word to His people.

You will also face a time when you are good at multiple things and people will be telling you how this or that is God's call and gifting on your life and how you should pursue it. Why? because they see you are good at it. Will they also tell you to pursue another thing you are good at? Of course, they will. Truth be said, you cannot be pursuing everything. You need to go to the Lord and hear Him then narrow down your options to the one thing and do just that.

In the beginning of your ministry...

God will allow you and give you the freedom to do a lot things but as you grow, they begin to narrow down.

Note: As you grow, your call becomes more defined and restrained meaning you no longer have the freedom to do certain things. At that time, you have to stay within your call.

I have also learned that when you are younger, you have many options and temptations to do many things, but as you grow older and walk with the Lord, your options begin to narrow which eventually reduces your available options and you get to find and do what God wants you to do.

For instance, if you want to join the US military, they have a cut off age limit and once you pass it, that is no longer an option. You cannot go astray in that sense. This is true with many other things as well.

Called to Ministry?

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

- a) Do not go to ministry if you are not called.

- b) You need to be called by God, or you will not last. If you are self-sent, grandma sent, pastor sent, you will fail. You need be sent and called by God.
- c) If you can do anything else besides ministry, do it. You should not be in ministry unless you are called, and it is the absolute passion of your life. If you are satisfied doing anything else, do it. Do what will satisfy you or else you will quit ministry. You won't make it. Ministry is not for everyone. It's hard. It is not for quitters!
- d) The most demanding thing you can ever do is ministry—preaching the Gospel.